CHRISTOSOPHY.

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CHRISTOSOPHY

THE LITURGY OF LANGUAGE

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I write these pages out of deep reverence for the Word.

From the unfathomable utterance of the one Creative Force, the Word has come to us. No individual persons have "made" the Word. It was born from the original emotion of the Universe and, if it is alive, it lives no other life than the life of that one emotion.

Whoever listens to the utterance of the Word without a curious, fabricated urge to investigate, listens to the one Creative Force itself and becomes a creator, knowing no other life than the One, the Original.

But whoever, with a probing and irreverent spirit, "creates" meanings for the Word, has been abandoned by the Word, and his curse shall be called: infertile rhetoric.

CHAPTER ONE

ON THE NAME "CHRISTOSOPHY".

I. WHAT IS A NAME?

For a long time, I searched for the name for these essays. I say a “name,” not a “title.” A title is a word by which one work is distinguished from another—nothing more. A title must “indicate” a work; it has no other task. This indication can be modest, but it can also be intrusive. In the latter case, a title may “attract.” But no matter how effectively a title may “attract,” it remains merely an intrusive label—a title is not yet a name.

I was looking for a name. What is a name?

A name, in the strict sense, is a word that not only “indicates,” but expresses the essence of the concept it names. A name is a word that not only points to the exterior of a thing, but shows itself to be born from the knowledge of the heart-core of the named being. And if the named being is a vision of life, then the name must be a watchword, one that

gathers together human souls who carry that named vision of life in their hearts and minds.

I sought a name for the vision of life that I will lay down in these pages. After much hesitation, I named that vision of life: Christosophy.

I must tell you why I hesitated in choosing that name. If you find this annoying, then you should not read me. For in that case, you do not understand the importance of a precise word—certainly not of a precise name—and then I am not writing for you.

Two reasons caused me to hesitate in accepting the name Christosophy. I will tell and explain them to you in turn in the two following essays.

II. SIMPLE KNOWLEDGE OF TRUTH.

The name Christosophy at first seemed too grand, too solemn to me. That name might lead some to expect that I am about to write on complex scholarship, with long chains of reasoning. Against that expectation, I must warn you from the very beginning. The vision of life that I call Christosophy is very simple. It does not demand of those who wish to know it much book-learning or academic training. It only requires an open mind, that accepts truth for the sake of truth; an open heart, that loves beauty for beauty's own sake; and an open soul, that finds truth beautiful and beauty true.

This is by no means to say that Christosophy is easy.

Easy and simple are by no means the same. Christosophy is in fact very difficult for us, the civilized people of our time, because it is so very difficult for us to be simply open.

Simplicity is a nobility of the spirit and a nobility of the heart, a form of life hindered by our ordinary *curiosity*, which we have called "scientific." Learned and unlearned alike, we have all been under the influence of the spirit of the age, which praised the all-knowing "scientific approach" as something very noble, even though it is nothing more than low-level nitpicking. The scholars have called "empiricism" the careful observation and diligent recording of details—but they did not see the essence of things, because to see the essence of things requires something other than care and effort. For that, the nobility of simplicity is needed—and that nobility they lacked. And the unlearned looked up to the empirical sniffers, because the glitter of details dazzled them, just as the glitter of a dolled-up woman can make a naïve young man lose his head. And just as the dazed young man no longer sees the woman, so too the empirically-confused person no longer sees truth.

But—does empirical science, that careful observing and diligent recording of details, not contain truth?

No. Not because its results are unsatisfying,

but because its method—its mode of searching—is not the creation of Truth itself.

Let us stick for a moment with the example of that woman. To be as fair as possible, let us now suppose that the young man does not lose his head. He sees her silk dress, her diamonds, her bracelets, and here and there a bit of powdered flesh, which suggests more than it shows. I will suppose that he looks carefully, with sharp eyes. He sees that the dress is real silk and that the diamonds are genuine. The bits of powdered flesh he sees as well—I will suppose he sees precisely—even the powder on them. But does he now see "truth"? Does he see the woman who stands before him? No—and in just the same way, empirical science sees very carefully, very sharply—but not truly.

Now, I do know that empirical knowledge usually does not stop at empirical observation. The scientific person will generally attempt to organize all the details he has observed, to summarize them under a single law or phenomenon. That law or phenomenon is then called a hypothesis, i.e., an assumption. The scientific person holds on to that assumption until a well-established fact turns out

to contradict it. Then he lets go of his hypothesis and looks for another. That is called philosophizing. Now suppose the most favorable case—namely, that the hypothesis is not in conflict with the truth. Is it then truth?

No. — Let us stay with the same example. The young man does not settle for carefully observing the dress, bracelets, diamonds, and powdered bits of flesh. He summarizes all those details and expresses his overall impression. He now says: "beautiful," or "ugly," or "overdone," and so on. Is he now seeing truth? Oh come now—the living reality standing before him, the woman—he still has not seen her! And yet, this is how the scientific person sees: by summarizing well-established facts and little observations under one law or phenomenon, without seeing through those phenomena.

Sometimes we imagine that the scientific person does see through those phenomena—because he dissects them. The coarser dissection is called physical, the finer one chemical. In that dissection, science has indeed come very far. It has broken matter down into molecules, the molecules into atoms, and finally even the atoms

have proven divisible. But—can we truly say that a person sees through phenomena just because he dissects them?

Come now, young man—dissect that woman: her diamonds, her bracelets, her dress, herself—yes, even herself. Take your little scalpel… no, you don't have to hurt her much… just a small cut in her earlobe, down low, that won't hurt too badly. A drop of blood—that's certainly something of her self, isn't it? Examine it under the microscope. Do you really believe that by doing so, you are seeing through the appearance? Do you think you are penetrating the reality that stands before you—that woman? Certainly not—in everyday life, you wouldn't be so naive. And yet, it is precisely this kind of naivety that one often finds in masters, doctors, and professors, who dissect so carefully… in their study rooms, apart from life.

We would rather remain within life, to see living truth. You know what sometimes happens to a young man when he sees a woman. He falls in love—nobly or basely, it doesn't matter here—and she falls in love—nobly or basely, it also doesn't matter. But we remain within life, don't we?... And so it sometimes happens: the enamored young man and the uplifted young woman meet—not dissected, but undressed.

Now he may say, in linguistically correct and genuinely real terms: “I have known her, that woman.” But I assure you, the experience caused her deep pain—it cut her more deeply than any scalpel could, her soul, her spirit, and her flesh trembled with intense pangs of love—and he too felt pain, so much so that he cried it out in solitude. And yet, it was all something very simple! So true it is that simplicity is not “easy.”

I told you just now that the woman undressed, and I must briefly point out that it absolutely matters how she undressed. She undressed because she loved. She could also have undressed because she needed to be examined by a doctor—which would not have been the same at all. That is actually very simple, but again—not all that easy. A woman who has undressed out of love is naked. A woman who has undressed not out of love is merely bare. And that is not the same—bare and naked.

I am mischievously glad that I can say this so fittingly at the beginning of my work. People who consider nakedness to be “immoral” will now—if their

aversion to nakedness is sincere—not read my work. And that is perfectly fine. Because nakedness and truth are one and the same. I do not write for those who do not dare to fully know and feel this through to the core.

“Bare” is something that stands alone, not connected to things that, strictly speaking, do not belong to it. In proper Dutch, we say of someone who acts purely out of curiosity, that he acts out of “bare” (“bloote”) curiosity. Likewise, in proper Dutch, we also say that a woman is bare (bloot)—fully or partially—when she is, to that extent, no longer connected with things that strictly speaking do not belong to her. Since clothing, strictly speaking, does not belong to a woman as such—that is, clothing is not the woman—one calls a woman bare insofar as she is stripped of her clothes.

But "naked" (naakt) means more than: stripped of clothing. "Naked" is everything, and only that, which is entirely and completely visible in a unified appearance. The “naked truth” is the truth that is fully visible, that allows itself to be seen as it truly is. If, for example, a woman undresses out of love—whether it be noble or base love, in any case from a wholly inner urge—then

she becomes naked, because she then reveals herself in her entire being. Then her flesh is no longer like a garment draped around her soul; then her flesh becomes the transparent expression of her soul. Then she is entirely visible, from her innermost innermost to the outermost surface of her skin. Then her deepest inner self and her outermost skin are one being. And the man who sees her then, sees a woman, a truth. He sees simply—but that simplicity was born of difficult labor, and whoever has once dared to live will know that it caused him pain, to him and to her.

Thus Life teaches us to know Life's truth:

Diligence and effort alone are not enough. Begin by loving what you wish to know in truth. And then: do not dissect, but ensure that what you wish to know undresses out of love, so that it stands before you, transparently naked. Only then does your seeing become insight. All other seeing is merely inspection. It is simple—but difficult—and… it hurts.

Oh wisdom of the ancient Greeks, who had one word for truth and nakedness: Aletheia!

People who like to pass for "spiritual"

will feel called to issue warnings here about the dangers of “sensuality.” They will praise the “spirit” that rises above sensuality and advocate for the most cunning kind of dissection there is: the artificial separation of spirit and sensuality.

This nature-defying separation is indeed easy to justify—especially by talking a lot—so much so that anyone who holds the Word in reverence is almost tempted, out of pure sorrow over such abuse of language, to remain silent.

This separation may be justifiable in a world of degenerates and prisoners... It is they, the envious, who persecute all who are not degenerate and not imprisoned—and hand out compliments to those who join in the persecution.

But this much is certain: The very nature of these so-called “spiritual” people accuses them constantly and calls them hypocrites. How well did Nietzsche speak to them, in the name of their own conscience:

“You too love the Earth and the earthly....— But there is shame in your love, and a bad conscience.”

There is sensuality—and there is sensuality, you “spiritual” people. Beethoven’s music is also “just” sound, “just” sensuality. Is your spirituality nobler than the sensual creations of Beethoven? If

the beauty of sensuality has not been granted to you, then ask alms from those who have been more richly endowed—like Beethoven, for example; that will not humiliate you, truly, it won't. But do not hypocritically claim, in endless talk, that you can easily do without sensuality. That only makes you unhappy, and it makes your own sensuality turn quite ugly.

III. NAKED DEED.

And the second reason I hesitated to choose the name Christosophy is this: I was afraid of being suspected of adhering to what is commonly regarded as “Christian morality.”

No, I will not now argue about what constitutes “true” Christianity. Let the theologians and churchgoers wear themselves out over that. Let them excommunicate one another or compete in demonstrating loyalty to Christian doctrine or the Christian spirit. One thing Life teaches us with certainty: Those who claim to uphold Christian morality, whether in a narrow or broad sense, all have this one thing in common: They do not believe in the redemptive power of naked Truth alone. It is true that a single voice among the Christians once said: “Sin boldly, but believe more boldly”— but that voice spoke to the deaf. The concrete Christian morality, as it has always existed and still exists, as it is preached among those who call themselves Christians and

as it continues to be preached under the banner of "humanity," does not profess in life that faith—the honoring of naked truth in spirit and in heart—is everything for salvation, and that outward "works" for salvation are nothing.

"The Truth," people say, "fine! — But the Truth must also do something! Action in its fists! Truth must reveal itself in deeds!"

Now, I immediately concede that Truth must do something. More precisely, I would say: The essence of truth is Life—and how could Life live without action?

But to speak properly about actions, I must first be able to see an action. And those who make so much fuss about deeds—they cannot. How do I see an action? In other words: How does it happen that I behold the naked Truth of an act?

You know the story of Cyrano de Bergerac, the poet who sang songs quietly in his misunderstood heart, who even got to hear that his beloved admired those songs—but who was not given the chance to let her see those poetic acts as his own soul's children. Cyrano was a very impractical man. He tossed a purse of gold away—just like that—to "pay for"

the bad verses of an arrogant fool—because bad verses deserve nothing better than to be "paid for." And when he was mocked for his foolishness, he continued, with great pride, to approve of his impractical deed. And do you know what he said? … "What a gesture!" He saw his act purely as a gesture, and that gesture he found beautiful—his gesture, his deed, he found good. Cyrano was a wise man. He had the gift of seeing human deeds in their nakedness.

Christianity is far more practical than Cyrano. It cares very little for the act as gesture. It only sees "deeds" and calls them good or evil depending on whether they are approved or condemned by laws or social norms. Respectable "humanity" also judges deeds based on their "usefulness." But the gesture — only a fool judges by the gesture.

I am such a fool, and I have reason for my foolishness.

Perhaps here you interrupt me and say I speak too much about myself. Before continuing, I will briefly reply: No one need take interest in the particular circumstances of my narrowly bounded individuality — and I will certainly not bother you with them. But deep within our lived reality,

we human beings are one, and it is precisely about that deepest layer of life that I speak. “I” then means: “all of us, to a greater or lesser extent.” It is true that I can speak of this deepest reality—this life of faith—better than many others, and that is why I do so. I have deeply known that reflecting on this life of faith has made me profoundly happy and profoundly miserable. I have examined my emotions of joy and sorrow seriously and honestly, and I found essentially the same emotions in others as well. And therefore, I may speak of it to people who are willing to listen with the same seriousness and honesty with which I speak. I do not ask you to agree with me. I only ask you to examine within yourself whether, at your core, you have not experienced the same as I. That is very simple—but again, not easy—and... it hurts. Humanity suffers deeply in all human beings, and it is precisely Humanity that wants to speak to your spirit and your heart, to my spirit and my heart.

And now: the act as gesture. Why do I dare claim that I can only truly see an act, and only then fairly judge it, when I see it as a gesture?

I have known many people whom the world considered “good.” They did nothing that wasn’t “allowed.” They were very respectable. They

were even charitable. They had fed the poor, comforted the sorrowful, cared for the sick, and visited prisoners. And yet, when I reflected on these people in quiet solitude, and, bent over my soul, asked myself whether I found their deeds good, something within me whispered—very clearly and firmly: No, their deeds are still not good. And when I then asked: Why not? I had to admit that something in their gesture repelled me. By gesture, I don't mean just the movement of the hand, of course, but the gesture of their whole being—the look in their eyes, the curve of their mouth, the tone of their voice. And when I then saw those same people again in their works of goodness and mercy, I had to increasingly admit to myself: I saw correctly. These people are not good—their gesture is wrong. Hasn't the same thing happened to you?

I have also known many people whom the world regarded as "bad"—thieves, perjurers, adulterers. And yet, after seriously and honestly observing them, I had to admit: These people are not bad—their gesture is good. Hasn't the same thing happened to you as well?

A gesture—what is a gesture?

I will try to explain it, and I so sincerely hope that I will say it truthfully, accurately, and clearly.

We already know that in order to know the truth of things, we must not see them dissected but unclothed—and specifically unclothed through love. This also applies to human actions.

The deeds of people are usually just as clothed as their bodies.

The "usefulness" of an act is not the act itself, but a garment wrapped around it.

The "success" of an act is not the act itself, but a garment wrapped around it.

Whether or not an act is "permissible" is not the act itself, but a garment wrapped around it.

In this way, many layers of clothing surround human actions and prevent us from seeing the actions themselves.

Now, there are many who understand this and conclude: Then strip away the clothes from human actions, and you will see those actions as they truly are. And with logical reasoning, they then argue against the authenticity of "usefulness," "success," "convention," and so on, and they give impassioned speeches against the clothed deeds of humankind. But in this way, they do not succeed in seeing naked human actions, nor

in revealing them to others. They see only “bare” actions. They are like a man who tears the clothes off a woman by force and then imagines he is seeing a naked woman.

No—ensure that the actions of people undress themselves for you out of love; only then do you see them as they are, in naked truth. This is not easy—but it is, fortunately, simple. Begin by loving people, broadly and deeply; love Humanity in every human being. Then the actions of people will reveal themselves to you—through their usefulness, success, and convention, through all their layers. For great is the urge of the human heart to show itself as it truly is, and people suffer bitterly from how difficult it is for them to reveal themselves—how little they are truly known. In spite of themselves, people long to unveil their actions—they are afraid of doing so, of course, because in our world it is so painfully impractical—but still, they must long for it. And therefore, nothing more is needed to see their naked actions than a loving eye.

If you can truly see with a loving eye, you will know what the gesture of human action is; it will reveal itself to you, it will speak to you, it will

laugh or weep before you, through all success, usefulness, and convention.

The gesture of a human act is its naked self, stripped of all coverings by an irresistible natural urge.

The gesture of a human act is its word, speaking simply because it must speak.

The gesture of a good human act is its laughter—its golden laughter of quiet joy.

The gesture of a bad human act is its weeping—its heart-wrenching weeping out of longing to be good.

But don't too hastily assume that you can see with a loving eye: It is so simple—and yet so difficult—and it hurts so much.

Let this be the sign to you that your vision truly comes from love:

When you clearly distinguish between good and bad deeds, yet still accept the bad deeds as fated occurrences as calmly and honestly as the good ones — then you are grateful even for the bad deeds, because they become for you a touchstone of your own authenticity. When you no longer praise good deeds and no longer condemn bad deeds, but simply call good what is good and bad what is bad,

out of the strength of clear vision—without wounding what you must judge (for bad deeds, seen naked, weep so bitterly for their own wickedness)—then you weep along with the bad deeds, and you will know your vision to be truly the vision of love.

And then—while Christians and humanists praise good deeds and condemn the bad with punishment—you will believe in the naked Truth within yourself: that Truth needs neither praise nor blame, but by its own power best fulfills its own Action: to teach people to see each other—truly see. And isn't truly seeing also truly doing good?

I spoke to you a few pages ago about the importance of a correct name. Now see how our Dutch word "gebaar" (gesture) is a remarkably accurate name for “naked act.” "Gebaar" is related to "baren", to bear or give birth. A gesture is the act of birthing. The naked act—the act in its essential truth—is the act as it is born, born from within the person themselves, carrying their own character — not as it is constructed from the outside by success, convention, utility, or whatever else.

Deeds with fists? Fine! But don’t forget that

deeds are born—and are good or bad from the moment of their birth. [1)]

The entire human body is a gesture, for anyone who is able to see it in chaste nakedness. And only those clothes do not violate the body's nakedness which are worn as a gesture—not hanging on the body like foreign, lifeless things, but belonging to the body, "draping" the body like a living, flowing extension of the body itself. That nakedness of the body together with noble garments is a higher nakedness than the nakedness of flesh alone. With such garments, the body is protected and adorned—not merely "clothed".

A people who wear such garments are chaste and truthful. The ennobling of our dress would serve Truth better than all so-called "naked culture". [2)]

1) Schoenmaekers is saying that moral judgment belongs to the origin of an action, not to its outward form or effectiveness: deeds are already good or bad at the moment they are born.

2) Nacktkultur ("naked culture") was a German movement in the early 20th century that promoted social nudity as a means of improving health, embracing nature, and challenging societal norms. Its ideas had not yet gained traction in the Netherlands at the time Schoenmaekers was writing *Christosophie*.

IV. WHAT "CHRISTOSOPHY" MEANS.

Why then do I call my worldview "Christosophy"?

I believe . . . . .

But first, I must explain what I mean by "belief" in this context.

This belief is not a vague suspicion, but a clear and firm insight.

This belief is not based on the pronouncements of any particular Bible, but rooted in our personal view of directly visible nature.

This belief is not suggested to us by any sort of propagandist. Woe to us if it were! For who can guarantee that a propagandist, consciously or unconsciously, is not concealing something of the naked Truth from us?

This belief grows, through both sorrow and joy,
in our soul and our spirit, our flesh and our blood,

just as inevitably and just as simply as every living fruit grows on every living tree.

This belief does not fear the scrutiny of science, but sees deeper than science could ever hope to.

This belief is not the conclusion of a logical argument, but an immediate, contemplative vision. That is why it is called: sophia, wisdom.

Is there any proof for this belief?

Much more than "proof." When we believe in this way, we know the nakedness of our seeing—and nakedness is truth.

Naked seeing of naked visibility, aware of the pure nakedness of both—that is belief, that is sophia.

This belief is supremely personal, because it is living truth. This belief is also supremely "social," communicative, because it is living truth.

Its willingness to be shared requires only—and requires in full severity—the demand of Truth: speak with transparent honesty to transparently honest listeners.

"Christosophy," I said.

I already spoke to you of "the Human in every human being."

Well then, I believe in the existence, the living being, the soul-and-body, powerful reality of the

of the one All-Human *) within every human individual—the one All-Human, always visible, visible everywhere, and performing His wondrous deed in all who believe in Him.

This one Human is not a vague, ethical abstraction, of the kind spoken of by modern Christians and humanists—no invisible spirit or merely rationally conceivable human nature, no vague feeling of benevolence and humanitarian kindness. This Human is a Person, powerful and true.

This one Human is also not a "historical" Jesus, who once lived visibly so long ago, but now is knowable only "spiritually," remaining distant in some high, far-off heaven.

No, this Human lives upon the Earth, just as truly now as He lived twenty centuries ago, forty centuries ago—still visible today to all who can see, blessing with realistic presence all who believe in Him.

An Earthly Human is this Human. And if many do not see Him, it is not because they have no interest in an invisible heaven, but because they cannot see the Earth—cannot see with their whole being, with eye and mind and heart. Their eyes are clouded, and that is why they scorn the Earth and dress up their lustful blindness with spiritual words.

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*) Dutch "Almensch" = "All-Human" or "everyman"; contrasted with Nietzsche's "Übermensch" = "overman" or "superhuman."

Learn to see with transparent eyes, learn to see the Earth with your whole being, and then you will also see Him—the one Human in every human, the one Christ.

It is indeed simple, but not easy, to see the Earth in this way.

The Earth, I say—the Earth itself, not torn-off parts of it, like flowers you've cut and placed in a decorative vase on a table, or people who have estranged themselves from her and speak in unearthly, lifeless ways about business, success, and heavenly spirituality.

No, the Earth itself—with her own flowers, her own people, her own light, her own misty skies and intoxicating scents, her own glistening, flowing water, her own warm fertility.

The Christian says: Read the Bible first; it will show you Christ.

The Roman Catholic says: Listen to the Church first; it will teach you Christ.

But this is how the Christosophist believes: Learn to see the Earth herself, learn to live along with her life, and she will reveal to you—visibly, tangibly, powerfully—the one Christ. Read the Bibles of the Christians and Hindus and Muslims, if you wish. Listen, if you wish, to what all

to what all the churches have proclaimed to you. But first, see the Earth—who was, and was visible, before the Bibles were written, before the churches were founded. The Earth holds the oldest rights.

Then, through strict self-discipline and self-education, remove from your own human nature everything that clouds your vision: success, permission and prohibition, convention—everything. I do not say: pretend that these things do not exist. No, take them into account when you must leave yourself to enter the lying world—and do so thoroughly: sin boldly. But believe more boldly still. Remove, with strict consistency, everything from your human being that can cloud your vision; banish it from all your love, from all your hatred. Then you will see the Earth in her Truth. For fortunately, the Earth is not yet clothed. And then this glorious thing will happen to you, as it happened to me: upon the naked Earth, the naked Human will greet you.

It will hurt—but calmly and surely your life will turn from full sorrow to full joy, from full joy to full sorrow, just as the Earth turns from full day to full night, from full night to full day.

“Why do you still use that old word Christ?

Has that word not caused much confusion, and wouldn't it be better to avoid it for the sake of clarity?"

I have only one answer: I keep it and honor it as a "name" for the sake of Truth.

Clarity is not the same as Truth. Clarity is exactness in the expression of something—but that "something" can be merely a thing that surrounds Truth, and that kind of clarity is also superficiality. Oh, how often people praise as "clear" what is hopelessly shallow. — To speak Truth is to clearly express not just anything, but the essence of something.

The word "Christ" has come to us as the name of the God-Man.

I believe in the God-Man. The naked Earth has shown me that one Human who, through His very humanity, is personally one with the one Creative Force—alive in humans and flowers and skies and waters.

I believe in the God-Man, and I do not "invent" a name for Him. To do so would mean I believed—and made others believe—that I had created a concept which had never existed before. What I offer is only an original deepening

and renewal of a concept as old as believing humanity itself. That is why I call the God-Man by the word that has flowed to us from unfathomable sources. And what is new in this word is this: that I can now speak it again—with a freshly revived tone and a freshly challenging yet simple clarity—as a "name".

There is only one name for salvation: an old name, made new again—Christ.

And there is only one knowing that leads to salvation: the naked seeing of naked visibility—faith, sophia.

Christosophy — two ancient words, one living name.

TO CLARIFY THE CONNECTON.

The following chapters are not “conclusions” drawn from the first one. Nor are they merely “views of the subject from another side” or “from a different perspective.” Rather, they are deepening and broader expressions of one and the same faith. Whoever sees in them only “repetition” does not understand what it means to meditate, deepen, and expand. Did Mauve *) ever commit “repetition” simply because he painted the same small grove so many times?

Each chapter will thus be a whole in itself, such that each can be read independently.

Nonetheless, the order is not without meaning.

Each subsequent chapter was inspired by a thought expressed in a previous one. Moreover, terms that have already been explained will generally not be explained again in later chapters, but will be assumed to be understood.

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*) **Anton Mauve** (1838–1888), a Dutch realist painter who was part of the Hague School and a significant influence on Vincent van Gogh.

SECOND CHAPTER.

ON BEING MOVED.

I. MYSTICAL VISION.

It is a source of great joy that there is a gradual decline in the overvaluation of purely scientific research and the hollow abstractions of philosophy, and that there is a growing recognition that a human being only truly knows when their entire being knows.

Let the intellect form concepts, sharply defined and firmly accurate — but a person will never truly believe that they are merely intellect. And so, whether consciously or not, they will come to understand that intellectual knowledge alone can never be true human knowledge. The one-sided intellectual will always hear, deep within, the silent accusation: "You were born to create — and what have you created?"

Let the spirit transcend all physicality and explain the universe within a brilliant system — still, the human being will never truly believe that they are only spirit, and thus, whether willingly or unwillingly, they will know that their knowledge remains untrue as long as they do not embrace dense, dangerous

physicality as willingly as they do safe, abstract systems. The one-sided spiritualist will always hear deep within them the accusation: You were born for the rapture of beauty — why do you not dare to go where Beauty smiles with her dangers of death?

But when everything human in the human being - their intellect, their spirit, and all their sensuality - lives in mindful contemplation, then the human being truly knows. Then all accusations within them die, and all the accusations of the world stand unmasked before them as pitiful envy.

This perception by the whole human being is what is called mystical seeing.

I will attempt to clarify this mystical vision for you by comparing it to the vision of the visual artist. The visual artist stands closer to the mystical vision than the spiritual or rational person. For the visual artist at least obeys the force of humility that completely fills the mystic. He at least openly acknowledges that he has not yet fully experienced or internalized the beauty of earthly appearance, which presents itself so naturally, so uncontrived, to be seen;

he therefore remains with the earthly appearance in a noble awareness that he has not yet fully fulfilled his earthly duty. That honesty is shared by both the mystical seer and the visual artist. But still, there is a great difference between the two.

The visual artist receives a deep or less deep impression from an earthly phenomenon, and from that impression, his unique "vision" is born. Then he makes that unique vision visible in his work — a work of the heart, which belongs to him and him alone. His work is not an imitation of nature, but a child of the earthly appearance that inspired him, and of his unique, individual viewpoint.

That is why the visual artist, as an artist, may rightly say that he sees originally. If his work were a “copy” of nature, that would not be the case — then he would see “exactly,” but not originally. And yet, he may not claim that he sees and reveals the essence of things. He sees in a distinctive way and reveals his unique, individual view of things. His view is indeed "objective," but still he does not see pure objectivity. He transforms an

objective reality into a revelation of his particular individuality.

Therefore, the visual artist, as an artist, may also not claim that he sees and reveals things with complete disinterest. His vision and revelation are “private property,” fundamentally different from the vision and revelation of other artists. The ability to feel and express his uniqueness as uniqueness is precisely his artistic pleasure. It is certainly a joy in his distinct individuality — not entirely selfless enjoyment. It is not purely a movement of beauty, but also enjoyment in the fact that this beauty is his and no one else's.

So then, what is mystical seeing?

Contemplate something that can be a living truth to you because it touches you in your heart. Now, above all, try not to be special. Be wary of all your peculiarities that make you different from other people, and sincerely desire to see the phenomenon as it is — that is, as it offers itself naturally to be seen, without your artificial analyses, constructions, or reasonings built around it. Then your vision is supremely original, because you are not swayed by

any particular individuality — not even by your own uniqueness. Then your vision is supremely objective, because you are not influenced by your "search," but allow objectivity itself to reveal itself to you. Then you are an original personality who is able to see. In you, the one great, original Soul of Humanity has come to vision. And you can undoubtedly, by examining yourself, recognize whether that great soul has begun to see within you. For that soul is one with all natural things, and this unity reveals itself in you through a spotless, selfless sympathy with everything that is naturally "given."

The mystical seer is not "coldly sober." He is moved, because he sees living truth — and living truth is beautiful.

But neither is the mystical seer "vaguely sentimental." Precisely because he earnestly and honestly wishes to see the things themselves, he constantly examines the emotion that those things stir within him. Did I not say: "Distrust all your peculiarities"? The mystical observer only trusts his vision if he can conscientiously say that his perception is accompanied and inspired by spotless, selfless admiration. But then he also knows that his knowledge through emotion

is a seeing of objectivity — he knows that he sees living truth. Emotion is always a sign that something enters our consciousness that is alive for us. Whoever can rigorously, honestly, and accurately examine their emotion before allowing it to live itself out freely, is capable of recognizing and revealing — not through sentimental flattery but through thoughtful feeling — the inner nature of the objective life that presented itself.

This is how the mystic examines himself: He allows his humanity to feel the phenomena he wishes to see, and

when his soul smiles in selfless sympathy, he says: This is the essence of the phenomenon, this is its beautiful truth and its true beauty;

when his soul is saddened in selfless sorrow, he says: This is a degeneration, which the natural essence must cast off in order to become pure and true again;

when his soul turns away in cold indifference, he says: This has never belonged to the essence of the phenomenon — it is merely an illusion, or pure imagination, or: it is a secondary feature that the phenomenon may lose without changing in essence.

He also strictly examines the selflessness of

his emotion. Truly selfless means truly non-individual, truly non-particular. I am not selfless if I allow myself to be influenced by my own particular nature — for instance, by my own temperament: in that case, I am pursuing my own interest. Nor am I selfless if I allow myself to be influenced by the particularities of another person or of many others: then I am pursuing the interest of others — but still, an interest.

The mystic recognizes his complete selflessness when he is able to say: I see nothing "particular"; every person can discover this, as long as they are able to turn inward. The seer in me is the Human in humanity.

Many truths that later became “scientific,” dryly communicable discoveries were first revealed through mystical vision. For example, Copernicus discovered the true motion of our solar system. In the dedication of his work to the Pope, Copernicus stated that the lack of symmetry in Ptolemy's system had bothered him. He could not admire it selflessly; he did not find it inwardly beautiful and therefore not true. Thus, ancient thinkers already understood — five centuries before Christ — the essence of what we now call the "theory of evolution," without the evidence that Darwin later provided, which has ultimately proven to be quite weak.

Controlled admiration and controlled inner calm were the deepest forces from which their vision of reality was born. *)

"Productive" in the ordinary artistic sense, the mystical seer is not. He wishes to see and reveal the natural things themselves and is fulfilled in his love for their truth. He does not "produce," but rather penetrates and allows others to penetrate more clearly and more warmly the living movement and the silent inevitability of nature itself — above all, of the human being himself.

And yet, the mystic possesses a creative power that is broader and deeper than that of the visual artist.

Whoever "penetrates and allows others to penetrate more clearly and more warmly the living movement and the silent inevitability of the human being himself" lets the force of his Soul-Thought burn within the hearts of people, so that the Human Being takes form within them and does his Deed, naturally and with certainty. Their Thought is the glowing,

*) **Karel Joël**, professor at the University of Basel, has historically demonstrated in his book "Der Ursprung der Naturphilosophie aus dem Geiste der Mystik" (The Origin of Natural Philosophy from the Spirit of Mysticism), that whenever a truth provided people with a fresher and more accurate understanding of natural life, that truth was first seen through mystical vision — not through “science.”

often unrecognized driving force behind the essential growth of humanity — a force he understands, and therefore guides; a force he foresees because he leads it. The mystic is a prophet; his sorrows are the birth pains that precede the rebirth of humanity; his joy is the foresight of a renewed humankind.

Mystical vision is called "mystical" because it perceives the essence of things—an essence that is Mystery, a natural Secret, unknowable by reason, but clearly knowable to the soul's vision that has been controlled by reason.

In our language, the thought-feeling process that leads to mystical vision is aptly called: reflection (bespiegeling). Through active self-control, the mystic strives to become a "mirror" of the objective, living reality—a good mirror that does not distort the image with personal quirks, but reflects the image of reality in its purity.

The mystical seer is like a clear lake—but a lake that knows within itself the strength to smooth its surface, to faithfully reflect the sky and clouds above.

He is passion-free like a calm lake, which reflects the rays of light that touch its clear waters without disturbance.

But his freedom from passion is not a mere absence of passion, not an impotent emptiness of life. Passion is capricious and fearful. The mystic, however, is filled with powerful emotion of the soul, yet he is free from capriciousness and fear. His emotion is love—not for this or that particular individual—but for all life, because it is life. Why would he be capricious? Individuals come and go, but Life is everywhere. Why would he fear? Individuals may be unfaithful, but Life remains life for all eternity.

II. WHAT "EMOTION" MEANS.

The mystical vision is feeling, thought, and deed—not feeling, thought, and deed alongside each other, but feeling, thought, and deed as one living human being.

In mystical vision, feeling, thought, and deed cannot be separated. A mystical vision without feeling, or thought, or deed is a contradiction.

But they can be distinguished. I can regard mystical vision primarily as feeling, and then I see it as the human center of life, sprouting from natural earthliness. I can also regard mystical vision primarily as thought, and then I see it as humble and powerful faith in the fatal unity of all things. Lastly, I can regard mystical vision primarily as deed, and then I see it as the concrete, ripened fruit of contemplation: as fact, natural object, or word.

v.4.1

I now wish to consider mystical vision primarily as feeling. I want to try to explain to you why, as feeling, it finds a very fitting name in our word “emotion” (ontroering).

Do not say that I am defining the meanings of words too cleverly. As long as we do not "make up" meanings for words, we cannot listen too sharply to the meanings that lie within the words themselves.
To truly see something alive means to hear its true word — and to honor that word as a name.

Language, in its words of life, is not a conventional construction, but a spontaneously formed and at the same time sharply accurate appearance of the essence of things themselves. That is why a person who knows the word as phenomenon with precision is a wise person. For speech that is both exact and spontaneous is wisdom. Spontaneity alone can be vague and thoughtless; exactness alone can be dry and lifeless — something that may seem profound through difficult detail, yet still fails to touch the ground of the things to be known, and therefore remains superficial. But speech that is both spontaneous and sharply precise is wise.

Language, then, in those words that have arisen from untraceable

sources, is something that has come into being spontaneously. We did not, through intellectual deliberation, say to one another: we shall call this "true" and that "real," this "beautiful" and that "graceful." Language came into being as flowers do — naturally, effortlessly, uncontrived.

Language is also sharply precise. What subtle distinctions live within its words! Let the fine nuances of everyday words affect you — for example, homely and cozy, cordial and courteous, intimate and familiar. We use these words constantly and often do not realize how subtly they distinguish the elements of human life. Words, too, are natural things, which we can choose as objects of contemplation. And whoever can see words mystically perceives their meaning — and the essence of what they so spontaneously and so precisely name.

Now consider the word “emotion” (ontroering) — the true name for mystical vision as feeling.

One and the same reality can make a very different impression on different people. A person may be moved by something to the depths of their soul, while that same “something” may touch another only very superficially. Depending on whether something

moves us more deeply or less deeply, we choose to describe it — when we wish to express what it means to us — with a word that is more intimate, or less so.
I now hear our language speak four words with a gradually deepening intimacy of meaning: "circumstance" (omstandigheid), "condition" (toestand), "affection" (aandoening), and "emotion" (ontroering). If we let these four words affect us with thoughtful clarity, the word "emotion" (ontroering) explains itself.

"Circumstance" (omstandigheid) is that which stands around a person — that is, what is first of all external to them, what does not touch their essence, and then, what surrounds them without living for them, without affecting them, but only influences them insofar as it limits or restrains their expressions of life. Suppose, for example, that someone is locked up in a prison; then their cell may be a mere *circumstance* to them. That same cell could also be a *condition*, even an *affection*, or even an *emotion* — that depends on how the soul of the prisoner relates to the cell. It will be a mere *circumstance* if, for example, the person locked inside carries no other feeling than the unpleasant sensation of external restriction of freedom. If you were to ask such a person: how are you doing in the

prison?, then he, if he were able and willing to express exactly what he felt inside, would reply: “I’d rather be out, I’d like to be free in my movements — I’m not, and I find that unpleasant.” He might add: “But I know, of course, that I’m not entirely free out there either — besides, out there I have to work harder than I do here; I find it unpleasant, but all things considered, it’s bearable here.” There are prisoners who, after the initial reaction to the restriction of freedom, feel this way — or rather, vegetate in a kind of emotional emptiness. For such numbed beings, the prison is merely a "circumstance" (omstandigheid).

The *condition* (**toe**stand) follows, in terms of how deeply it affects the inner life of a person, after the *circumstance* (**om**standigheid); that is to say, the *condition* is already somewhat more intimate than the *circumstance*, although still not as inward as the *affection* (aandoening), which in turn is not as inward as *emotion* (ontroering). The little word "**toe**" ("towards") in "**toe**stand" indicates something that is still far from being the person’s innermost essence; it remains something that is added or attached to them. But it no longer so explicitly expresses the wholly foreign, the entirely external thing around them.

This word “condition” (toestand) corresponds to

a very accurately named reality. The same prison cell, for instance, which is merely a *circumstance* for one person, can be a *condition* for another. Imagine a "sociable" farmer: he enjoys lively company, cheerfulness, playing cards, and idle chatter — he knows no other kind of human life, at least not yet. If such a person is locked up in prison, his prison cell will be a "condition" for him, at least for a while. The cell is more distressing to him than to the dulled individual I just described. If we ask this "sociable" farmer how he feels in prison, he would, speaking honestly, answer: "I find it terribly boring here — I can't drink, play cards, or chat — I'm just bored." It may happen, over time, that his feelings change; perhaps he sinks into emotional numbness, or perhaps he rises to a nobler kind of suffering. But for a while, his suffering is not heartfelt, though it's not entirely devoid of human feeling. He finds his "confinement" merely tedious; the cell, to him, is a "condition."

Affection (**aan**doening) follows, in terms of distance from the human center of life, after the *condition* (**toe**stand). The little word "aan" ("to" or "upon") expresses something more intimate than "om" ("around") and "toe" ("to"/"added"). And the word "doening" ("doing" or "activity") expresses something more alive than "stand" ("state" or "position").

With this word “affection” (aandoening) again corresponds a rightly named reality. Let us stay with the same example: the same prison that is a *condition* for one person can be an *affection* for another. Consider an ordinary, passionate person: he does not know deep, quiet *emotion* (ontroering) of the soul — at least not yet. But he does experience intense emotional agitation, which already lives deeper in the human being than the shallow pleasure or displeasure of the sociable card player and beer drinker. For someone like that, prison will naturally be an *affection* (aandoening). He will harbor a brooding desire for revenge, he will rail against everything that contributed to putting him in prison, and when he is released, he will rage violently, like the discharged colonial soldier in "*Op Hoop van Zegen*" *) by Heijermans: “Fresh off the sea — in a cell — no wind and no water and no air — a little window with bars high up, no bigger than a porthole — and the nights — the damned nights when you couldn’t sleep — the nights when you jumped up and paced like a madman back and forth — back and forth — four steps exactly — the nights when you just sat there praying not to, not to — go mad — and cursed everything, everything, everything! . . . . .”

*) "*The Good Hope*": a play by **Herman Heijermans** (1864–1924), a prominent Dutch playwright, novelist, journalist, and social critic.

Emotion, ultimately, lives in the soul — in the very center of human life itself. The word "**ont**roering" (emotion) is remarkably precise. The prefix "ont" here means: from within to without. The word "ont" can have various meanings, but here it clearly refers to — as in *unfolding* (**ont**wikkelen), or *breaking free* (**ont**worstelen), etc., — a movement through which something comes forth from the inside out. To be *moved* (**ont**roerd) is thus to be stirred from the inside outward — a *stirring*, not a violent upheaval, but a centrifugal, swelling movement that gradually expands outward from the center. This word corresponds to a deeply accurate reality: To feel the innermost essence of the human being, to feel the soul, is *stirring* (ontroering) — a movement that swells outward from within, complex in form but at its core an expressive function of life itself. It is not, of course, a sudden or intense emotional outburst, but a gradual unfolding of the human in the human — a human quality that may be awakened or prompted but is not caused by anything external, as is the case with *affection*, nor fixed in place by something external, as is the case with *circumstance*. The external condition of *emotion*, on the contrary, is governed and inspired by the emotion itself:

it becomes beauty, seen in the light that the emotionally moved person draws up from within themselves.

Suppose, for example, that a mystically inclined person is locked up in a dungeon. Then the movement of his soul will warm the cold walls of his cell; he will transform them, from out of his emotionally stirred heart, into a quiet temple where prayers whisper of dignified acceptance and calm strength. The bitter facts of his existence will not crash down upon him, pressing his heart into furious resistance. No — he will take them into his soul as fertile seeds, from which humble-yet-proud thoughts bloom into mature human wisdom born of emotion. Oscar Wilde was such a person. I wish you all a prison, if you are able to breathe life into it with a language of emotion like his:

"... something hidden away in my nature, like a treasure in a field, is Humility. It is the last thing left in me, and the best: ... One cannot acquire it, except by surrendering everything that one has. It is only when one has lost all things, that one knows that one possesses it. Now I have realised that it is in me, I see quite clearly what I ought to do; in fact, must do. And when I use such a phrase as that,

I need not say that I am not alluding to any external sanction or command. I admit none. I am far more of an individualist than I ever was. Nothing seems to me of the smallest value except what one gets out of oneself. My nature is seeking a fresh mode of self-realisation. That is all I am concerned with. And the first thing that I have got to do is to free myself from any possible bitterness of feeling against the world. I am completely penniless, and absolutely homeless. Yet there are worse things in the world than that. I am quite candid when I say that rather than go out from this prison with bitterness in my heart against the world, I would gladly and readily beg my bread from door to door.... provided I had love in my heart." *)

*) from Oscar Wilde's long letter *De Profundis,* written during his imprisonment in Reading Gaol between January and March 1897, and published posthumously in 1905.

III. AFFECTION AND EMOTION.

We must once again take a clear look at the difference between *affection* (aandoening) and *emotion* (ontroering). For only *emotion* is truly mystical feeling; only the thought born of *emotion* is truly mystical thought, truly a thought of faith; and only the act born of *emotion* is truly a mystical act, truly an act of faith.

Now it is impossible, in theory, to draw a sharp dividing line between *affection* and *emotion*. In concrete reality, after all, these aspects of life cannot be sharply separated from one another — any more than the colors of the rainbow can be. In other words, I cannot draw a clear boundary between the colors of the rainbow without doing violence to reality. And yet, the different colors do exist in clearly perceptible diversity. By way of comparison, I can certainly say: this is clearly yellow, and that is clearly red — while in between, the various colors gradually flow into one another. In the same comparative way,

I can also say: this is definitely "affection" and that is "emotion" — even though in between lies a field of blended feelings, which cannot clearly be called pure affections or pure emotions.

If I reflect deeply on what a pure affection and a pure emotion are, I believe I can clearly point them out in the following three propositions. If these propositions are true in lived experience, you will recognize them as truth — provided I am able to explain them clearly, and you are able to see them clearly.

1. *Affection* (aandoening) is aroused by separation; *emotion* (ontroering) arises from the unity of all things.

Suppose, for example, that I am "affected" (aangedaan) by the beauty of a flower. Then the appearance of the flower will work upon me through its separateness, its "apartness" (apartheid) — for example, through its graceful form, which it possesses in distinction from and contrast to other things. And the response of my emotionally stirred heart will then also be directed toward that flower as something separate. I do not feel the deeper unity of that flower with other things; the effect of the flower's appearance on me,

and the reaction of my feeling toward it, is a limited, particular interaction between two individuals — to the extent that they are separate individuals. This interaction is like a mutual caressing between two enclosed selves, each absorbed in its own small self. I will savor and re-savor every little curve in the lines of that flower, and every subtle nuance of its colors, as something highly significant. I will be filled with small, tender attentions toward all its details. But that behind the flower's appearance lives a shaping force — one and the same in all flowers, one in all of earthly appearance — I find absent when my feeling stays at the level of mere *affection*.

But when I am emotionally "moved" (ontroerd) by the appearance of a flower, then that flower affects me through the revelation of the one Life that burns within it — and within all of creation. Then I will feel, deeply and directly, the one Creative Force that lives both in the flower and in everything. And the response of my soul's *stirring* will then be directed toward that flower not as something separate, but as a profound unity with all of creation. The separate impression of the flower is still there — it is not indistinct — but is now merely a catalyst, not a force *affecting* me. My own innermost life

is now the force that inspires me and transforms the flower's appearance into an expression of my humanity. Now, there is no longer an exchange between me and the flower like the mutual caressing of two closed-off selves, each absorbed in its own small world. I still see the particular curves in the lines of that flower and the subtle shades of its colors — oh, I do see them — but I no longer find them so important. I am no longer filled with small, tender attentions toward all those details. Because now, what is revealed to me is the one imaginative force behind both myself and the flower — and that full, radiant revelation is the life of *emotion* (ontroering), far, far nobler than *affection* (aandoening). It was in this way that the mystic Meister Eckhart could see the flowers when he said: "Here, all the blades of grass and wood and stone and all things are one. This is the very best, and to that I have given my whole love."

Only *emotion* (ontroering), not *affection*, is true human love. It alone meets the standards we all set for what we call genuine human love — precisely because it alone lives in the "unity of all things".

It is free from all base desire. Base desire is only possible in relation to something when it is viewed in its separateness, in its apartness. Of course, not all *affection* is of the same nature — far from it.

And yet—what we call base desire is only possible within *affection* (aandoening), in the interaction between one separated self and another, as such. Base desire is not possible in the life of the deep inner essence of beings—that life which is the direct expression of the one Creative Force.

Emotion (ontroering) is also magnanimous. It will not be chilled or diminished by some small change in the details of the being that once awakened it. After all, it does not come alive through details or separateness; it comes alive because the being which stirred the emotion revealed itself as a symbol of the one Creative Force.

Emotion (ontroering) is faithful. It does not seek, from one separate entity to another, an ever-stronger stimulus. For separateness as such is not its stimulus. A particular individual being is for it only a light, illuminating the realm where "all blades of grass and wood and stone and all things are one."

2. *Emotion* (ontroering) is, by its nature, quiet; *affection* (aandoening) is, by its nature, restless.

The term "quiet" in this context must, of course, be understood in an inner, not an outer sense. It does not mean the absence of external noise, but rather the absence of inner, noisy emotional agitation, and

the presence of a force that calmly and confidently overcomes all turbulence of the heart.

Why is *affection* (aandoening) naturally restless? Because it is stirred by separateness as such. Therefore, it must carry within it the character of separation. Particular things move like sea waves, clashing in action and reaction against one another. The distinct individualities of nature are erratic—how could the emotion they provoke not be erratic as well? The "struggle for existence" characterizes the individual as such; that struggle is waged among all that is individual and asserts itself as such: humans, animals, plants, stones—everything. Don't even falling raindrops battle with the rock, hollowing it out, tap by tap? How could *affection*, stirred by the individual as individual, not tremble with the clamor of combat?

And why is *emotion* (ontroering) naturally quiet? —At the bottom of the sea, the water is still, because there are not "many" waves crashing chaotically against one another with noise and color. At the bottom of the sea, there is one water — and that one water does not struggle with itself. All things, when seen in their separateness, are like multicolored waves —but within all of them lives the one Life.
That one Life does not struggle with itself; that

one Life does not collide with itself, that one Life is still. How could *emotion* (ontroering) not be quiet, when it blossoms precisely from that one Life? While *affection* (aandoening) "fights for survival," emotion possesses the power to live — a higher courage, and a higher victory, than any "struggle" could ever reveal..

3. The person of *emotion* (ontroeringsmensch) is solitary; the person of *affection* (aandoeningsmensch) is forsaken.

No one is truly forsaken who is able to commune with their own soul. But when our deepest being has nothing more to say to us, we suffer that sharp emptiness of the heart which we call forsakenness. The person who lives only in *affections* (aandoeningen) lacks the living connection with their own deepest self. On the surface of their being, they may feel now this, now that — but their one quiet soul hungers within them for a single, quiet word of *emotion* (ontroeringswoord). Let a thousand friends "keep them company" — not one of them gives life. They feel alone everywhere: alone with flowers, with people, with animals, alone even in the most intense stirring of emotion. For nothing can speak to their true self, to their silent, captive soul.

The person of *emotion* (ontroeringsmensch), however, is solitary.

Around him, the countless little human existences spin, frolic, and make noise. He sees all their little envies, quarrels, and hatreds as things that do not concern him. Only when these little fragments of separateness become a bit too loud, he thinks: “What a pity you make so much noise — I’m having trouble hearing my soul.” And the people say: “There he is again, grumbling in his little corner.” But when the noisy fragments tire of their own clamor and confusion, the person of emotion once again speaks his ongoing word with his quiet soul. This word is solitary, because only one can speak it — the All-Human (Almensch), who is silent in all the loud ones and speaks in all the quiet-hearted. And the boundless multiplicity of the separate, who fight in loneliness for a sliver of pleasure, hate the solitary person, because he is a living contradiction to their emptiness of heart. They call him “cowardly” because he honors the power to live and regards the struggle for survival only with compassion. They call him “sensual” because he demands emotion even in thought, and calls emotionless thoughts nothing more than concept-noise from intellectual parvenus. They call him “sentimental” because he can express his mighty feeling — the very thing they long for behind all their solid arguments and lifeless systems.

Sentimentality is a longing for sentiment — it is forsakenness.

But the solitary person possesses sentiment; his heart beats with the life-current of the One who is as wide as the sea and the earth — the Human, the Christ.

IV. RICH SOLITUDE.

> And life is only truly life
> When it stirs unto death.
> P. C. BOUTENS.

The person of *affection* (aandoeningsmensch) is poor, even if he possesses all the treasures of the world. For his forsaken soul assimilates none of those treasures — he does not transform them into his own flesh and blood.

But the solitude of the person of *emotion* (ontroeringsmensch) is always rich. For the person of emotion is capable of admiration — and everything a human being can admire becomes soul-property. Because all, and only that which becomes an object of admiration for a person, opens the door to human happiness.

Soulless intellectuals, who are without admiration, speak contemptuously of this as mere "appearance." And phantom-humans scoff at it as "sensuality." But blessed is the person of emotion, who possesses such an unwoundable inner life that he no longer argues with impotent intellect to prove:

"It is not illusion." Blessed is the person of emotion (ontroeringsmensch) who may so trust the elegance of their soul-life that they no longer argue with calcified religiosity to prove: "I am not sensual." Blessed is the person of emotion whose whole life laughs and weeps: "Yes, of course it is appearance — but that appearance is the only truth; yes, of course it is sensual — but that sensuality is the only lofty, ethereally pure thing."

There are two kinds of appearance: Natural appearance (natuurschijn), that is, appearance that arises from within and worldly appearance (wereldsche schijn), that is, imposed from without. The fabricated, worldly kind of appearance has nothing in common with our soul that knows life. Its essence is artificiality, while the life of the soul is transparency. And to the living soul, it makes no difference at all what that artificiality produces: whether respectability, or honor, or even so-called scientific classifications of nature. Worldly appearance is all artificiality — including the nature-violating analyses by the soulless scholar. Whoever imagines they have truly seen a flower only after they have stripped it bare and studied it, petal by petal, is foolish and disrespectful. But whoever can surrender themselves to admiration for its own sake —within them, there is no more "artificiality", no worldly appearance. Within him

live the scents and colors and sounds of natural appearance, which becomes, wholly of itself, manifestation: fragrant, colorful, resonant Truth.

Look here at a painting by Mauve. — Appearance, isn't it? That painted heath is not a real heath, and those painted sheep are not real sheep. And yet, that appearance is living reality, because it was not "made" but born—naturally born from a deep emotion in Mauve. And therefore, whoever allows the appearance of that painting to work upon them perceives the reality of that artwork—not the one who knows the actual paints scientifically and can write down their chemical composition in an "exact" formula. Thus, all appearance that arises from within is living reality. The humble, devout person who, for instance, sees the stars as shining greetings of love from a "Heavenly Father" may not take in the full scientific reality of the stars, but is still closer to the living Truth than a proud scholar who knows the size of the stars and can calculate the speed of their light—but does not experience that the stars, too, are expressions of the one Creative Life.

No, reality does not exclude natural appearance.

On the contrary: reality becomes true manifestation precisely through its natural appearance—becomes humanly revealed, truth living in the human being.

Consider another painting: Fra Angelico's "Music Making Angels." Appearance, surely? Those angels are not angels, and their instruments are not instruments—they are colors, nothing but delicate, cloud-like colors, and they are lines, nothing but trembling, floating lines. But surrender yourself humbly to the charm of that appearance… No, do not now say that all this is merely "illusion." The soul of Fra Angelico, who colored and lined in that way, is not an illusion, but a very deep reality; it is this reality that moves you when you can behold those "angels" in their own essence. And do you hear their true sound?... "Gloria, Gloria"… It is not a sound that first strikes your ears and then affects your brain. It is a soul-song, which long dreamed within you, now awakened, and yet not forsaking its dream. It is the essence of sound-beauty, one with the essence of color-enchantment: sounding colors and coloring sounds; the lines float and tremble like sound, and the colors float and tremble along. Two

senses—sight and hearing—you feel here no longer separate in their individuality, but alive in a single stirring, because they have come into contact with the one living soul. — As a visual artist, Angelico is by far Mauve's inferior. But as a mystical seer of both color and sound, he perceives a deeper reality through deeper appearance, because his vision is lit from something more inward in his humanity, where even the differences of sensory perception die off to live as unity in the trembling of the one soul.

When I speak of "dying," I certainly do not mean incidental matters like death throes, cemeteries, and other horrors. I speak of the essence of dying, but then I mean it realistically and truly when I say that emotion—that deep stirring—is a kind of dying. The essence of dying is the overwhelming and certain absorption of a bounded individuality into the unity of Earth-life. That is how we see dying if we simply and honestly observe what the Earth simply and honestly shows us. And in this way, *emotion* (ontroering) is a form of dying. And because this deep stirring burns through all the senses, it becomes a complete death of individual separateness, a full transition into the total life of universal humanity. And then it is not the appearance

of some artificial creation, but the broad radiance of the whole Earth that comes to manifestation in the human being.

Go, when you are once very calmly happy, to a virginal spot in nature. Go all alone, or, if you love, take your beloved with you. For the solitude shared by two lovers is a deeper solitude than solitude alone. Surrender yourself here in deepest humility to the enchantment that trembles through all your senses. See, feel, hear, smell, taste, drink everything that the Creator offers you in His cup, "in which all things are well mixed." Forget now all measuring and weighing and dissecting, and celebrate your feast of surrender, your offering . . . Now your limited selfhood is truly "dead." Indeed, your trembling heart still beats, but it beats only to the rhythm of the broad Earth-life. Indeed, your blood flows through your veins, but you know that it flows like all streams, driven by fate alone by the one soul of the earth, which is the soul of Humanity. The Earth has been revealed to you as Appearance, to you, in whom alone the Christ lives. And thus does Christ pray His earthly prayer:

Now, with all your beauty, I want to intoxicate all my senses, O dear Earth.

May the sacred fragrance of your life drive away the thick smoke that billows from the arrogant world of falsehood surrounding me.

May I behold your Truth, my vision, born from your glowing Heart!

Thank you, O Earth, that you too give intoxication as an antidote to the poisonous vapors of the world,

That torment my soul with lying: there is no more Beauty...

No, I do not call this a heavenly illusion:

That the Sun loves me and my love nourishes me,

And that the birds greet me from far-off beloved ones,

And that the clouds rain from joy and from sorrow, which is my sorrow and my joy —

For is the poet's vision not of you and your flowers, O Earth!

Now that I can see you as you are and appear to be, now I have died, I no longer live, but All lives within me.

But this dying is an act of overflowing life: thus would I die a thousand times,

And in dying know, that All lives eternally . . .

THIRD CHAPTER.

ON THE THOUGHT OF EMOTION.

v.4.1

I. DEVOTIONAL BELIEF.

Affection (aandoening) is something specific and individual. When it spreads to multiple people, it does so through the influence of one individual upon another. The person of *affection* tries to place others "under the influence"; he engages in propaganda, and his emotional enjoyment increases in proportion to how many and how strongly he can bring others under his influence. *Emotion* (ontroering), however, is a life-function of the Human within the human. If it spreads to many, it does not do so by putting them "under the influence," but through an infinitely nobler power — a power that liberates and awakens the one All-Human (Almensch) in multiple people. The person of *emotion* does not act upon "others" — for those others are not truly "others" to him; after all, there is only one All-Human, from whom *emotion* receives its warmth, its light, and its power. *Emotion* does not shine like loud colors that cry out: "Look at me — me, this special, separate thing!" It does not plead: "I am equal, *I*."

It does not lament: “Have pity on me.” It does not cry out: “Woe, woe to those who do not hear me.” *Emotion* (ontroering) is universally human—a life of quiet modesty ... it is present in all deep feeling, in all pure thought. And when it steps outward, it does so thoughtfully, liberating thought, warm in its wisdom, and measured in its fullness of heart. *Emotion* is pure thought.

But also: Pure thought is *emotion* (ontroering). It is precisely in thought that is free from all thought-hostile confusion, fear, and restlessness that the purest feeling lives. — You will not doubt that mathematics is pure thought. Numbers certainly have nothing to do with fantasy or passion; numbers exist only within our life of thought. And yet — or rather, precisely because of that — mathematical knowledge of truth is a kind of *emotional knowledge* (ontroeringskennis). Take, for example, this elementary proposition in geometry: The sum of the angles in a triangle is equal to a straight angle — or, in other words, the sum of two right angles. At school we supposedly “learned to prove” this statement. But let us now ask ourselves: What inner function of life within us confirms this truth? Which human life-function alone is capable of affirming it?

Have you come to see that proposition as true solely

through factual observation with your eyes? No — you have not factually seen that it holds for all triangles without exception. You have seen triangles — years ago, the day before yesterday, yesterday, even today — but you have not seen all triangles, and you never will. And yet, you know that the proposition holds for all triangles.

Do you perhaps know this through the function of your reasoning intellect? No — your intellect cannot prove to you the universal validity of that proposition. It is true that you have often observed its correctness in actual cases, but from that, your intellect can only logically conclude that it holds as a rule. But that this rule has no exceptions, as you do in fact truly believe — *that* your intellect cannot conclude. That would no longer be a logical conclusion — that would be a prophecy — and your intellect, by itself, cannot prophesy.

Or are you perhaps so convinced of the correctness of that proposition because of the assurance of an authority — first of your teacher, later of all those people who claim to know it?

Certainly not. Even if a thousand people were to "show" you that the sum of the angles of a triangle is more or less than

a straight angle, you would still say: I am dealing with illusionists—the sum of the angles of a triangle is and remains equal to a straight angle, no more and no less.

Let's be honest: we *believe* in that mathematical proposition. We believe not on the "authority" of someone else, but from the declaration of the Human within us, who must think mathematically, because he cannot do otherwise—because it cannot be otherwise. That simple proposition is a declaration of the All-Human—the one who does not reason and prove, who does not defend or indulge personal opinions, but in whom the Earth reflects upon itself, in a way that is universally human, universally actual. The All-Human does not bow to the authority of another, because for him there is no "other." He knows through the *all-encompassing emotion* (alontroering) of a single Act of Thought, of a single Heart.

Thought-emotion, emotion-thought — the words may sound strange to you only because you're probably used to assuming that all emotional life involves a kind of excited *feeling* (aandoening), which doesn't sit well with the calm nature of thought. But deep, quiet, universally human, modest *emotion* (ontroering) is not cold or dry — it, too, is feeling . . .

Now, I certainly do not mean to claim that the *emotion* of mathematics is the highest or warmest form of emotion. But I chose it as an example because, in it, all *feeling* (aandoening) — all excited, ego-based feeling — is clearly absent. That's why it's the safest case to ask: what is the nature of *emotion* as thought? So that we can then use the awareness of *that* nature as a touchstone for our own thinking. In this way, we may come to a secure certainty about which thoughts are pure thoughts, and which are not; which thoughts may be called *emotional-thoughts* (ontroerings-gedachten), and which are still "individual," still susceptible to fear and the whims of emotional disturbance.

Now then: the essence of mathematical thinking is faith — a faith that is free from authority, unprovable, firm, and indestructible — a faith in fate, that is, in the absolute unity of necessity and being. All of mathematics is animated by this firm, immediate awareness of the fated, the inevitable; without it, mathematics would be incomprehensible and impossible. It is necessary — it is fated — that the sum of the angles in a triangle equals a straight angle. And when we speak that proposition aloud, we believe in its necessity, we surrender ourselves to it — just as unconditionally, and just as fully, as a dying person surrenders to death.

The *faith in Fate* (Noodlotsgeloof) is the central thought of *emotional insight* (ontroeringsgedachte). Let that faith be our judge when we ask whether our thoughts are as pure and universal as mathematics; let that faith be our conscience when we ask whether our thinking is purely human, truly human thinking; let that faith serve as our warning when our thoughts are influenced by individual separateness instead of being drawn from the One Human within humanity...

But our emotionally reactive nature resists this, and claims that *faith in Fate* is "cold" and "heartless"… I will respond to that in detail in the following pages. For now, only this:

Faith in Fate is the essential spirit of the art form we call "tragedy." Are the poets of tragedy truly cold and heartless? The Pythagoreans were the first mathematicians — and the first musicians as well; to them, the universe was a single harmony of numbers, they saw the gesture of creation as a living rhythm, and heard the spheres singing the eternal song of Necessity and Being. Were the Pythagoreans cold and heartless? The truth is that many people are so utterly exhausted from blindly struggling against Fate that their overstimulated nervous systems can no longer truly feel the quiet, tragic, joyful or sorrowful emotions — and

so they seek out wild or shallow pleasures just to feel something at all. Beneath all their emotional life rumbles the loudest — yet most depleted — of all feelings: fear. It is this fear that accuses Fate, that sees every "must" as a forced and oppressive demand. But "must" — in itself — is neither forced nor free. It becomes forced in the fearful person who clings to vanishing separateness. It becomes free in the fearless soul who is attached to nothing because she can illuminate and warm everything around her through her *deep emotional presence* (ontroering). Far removed from all pleasures and cheap excitement that momentarily jolt the spiritually dead into puppet-like spasms of shallow feeling, lives true Happiness — the carefree child born of Eternal Necessity and the Fearless Human Soul.

II. PERSON AND INDIVIDUAL.

Many objections can be raised against *faith in Fate*. I believe I can reduce them all to three, which I will formulate and refute one by one. Anyone who sees in this an unconditional act of "propaganda" for *faith in Fate* is greatly mistaken. The propagandist wants others to adopt his personal desires or convictions; propaganda is always a disguised or distorted form of individual worship. But clear thinking and clear speaking are by no means the same as propaganda. Refuting objections can be propaganda—but just as easily, it can be a natural method of thinking and speaking clearly. The propagandist wants to turn his opponents into followers. But the Christosophist says: Let my opponents remain opponents; I am grateful to them for helping me clarify my concepts. — Such a person does not speak like a "propagandist."

Here is the first objection:
A believer in Fate cannot be a personality. *)

*) This assertion assumes that *Fate* is impersonal, whereas *personality* is personal and unique.

For Fate is something impersonal; and whoever consciously allows themselves to be moved by it supposedly does not do justice to their defining characteristics—those by which they differ from others—and thus cannot be a personality.

This objection contains a misunderstanding about the term "personality," and it's a very common misunderstanding. The objection confuses **personality** with *particularity*, **person** with *individual*. A person's *particularity* is the sum of everything by which they differ from other people. A person's **personality**, however, is the shining through of the one original, universal humanity within them. This distinction between **person** and *individual* is no fiction; it is grounded in reality and corresponds with careful language use and etymology.

We all know within ourselves a single, universally human essence that exists and unfolds in us without our particular doing—an essence that, by necessity, makes our feeling feel as it must by nature, and makes our mind think in the way it must, because it cannot be otherwise. This one essence continues to *shine through* us—more strongly or more faintly—despite influences that *individualize*; it **personares**, which literally means "resounds through." That essence is our **personality**; through its life, we become truly human **persons**.

We also recognize a separate, particular essence in people—one they "make" through deliberate striving toward various goals, through the cultivation of private interests, individual character, personal worldviews, and so on. This essence carries our private ideas and notions; it divides people from other people, nations from other nations, provinces from provinces, municipalities from municipalities, families from families—divides humanity to such an extent that it ultimately consists of *individuals*: literally, undividable, separate units.

What, then, is the real relationship between **person** and *individual* in a human being, according to a genuine estimation of value?

Personality is the vital principle of everything in a human being that can truly be valued: nobility, beauty, happiness. *Individuality*, however, is—by its natural rank—no more than a condition without which **personality** cannot live or reveal itself. If *individuality* tries to be more than just a condition, if it wants to act as a driving force, it becomes an obstacle to the unfolding of **personality**—an obstacle to the realization of human nobility, human beauty, human happiness.

Let me clarify this brief answer with a simple example. To project an image using a magic lantern, two things are required: **1** a lit lantern containing an image, and **2** a white screen onto which the image is projected. Which of these two is the active cause, and which is merely a condition? The white screen, of course, is the condition—nothing more than a condition. The image is not truly produced by the screen, but by the light of the projection device in which the transparent illustration is placed. The screen merely has to receive and reflect whatever image falls upon it; in itself, it is not an image at all. If I try to make the screen something more than just a screen (condition), the projection of the image will fail. If the screen, for instance, is not white but shows a color, that color will blend with the image, and the image will not be rendered purely. Worse still: if the screen is already a painting in its own right, then the image from the magic lantern will either not appear at all, or only very unclearly.

It is the same with human **personality** and *individuality*. From the perspective of true value, *individuality* is like the screen on which **personality**

is projected. The *individual* is, by nature, called to be evenly white—so that only **personal** colors, visible through it, may shine in their original, pure, universally human light. Where the individual fulfills this humble duty, the powerful **Personality** comes to life—so often confused with the brute-force, noisy type of *individuality*. The truly great Personalities are not the shouters of shrill uniqueness, echoed and followed by sheep-like creatures. The genuine Personalities are those people through whom — precisely because they do not strive to be "special" — the broad, singular, fated, original humanity shines through with extraordinary clarity, and resounds with extraordinary fullness. They are prophetic natures who teach: go within yourself and listen to the deepest human in you. They proclaim nothing "strange," for they only listen inwardly to the universal humanity within themselves—the same humanity that also lives in those who hear them. They ask attention only for what people's own souls have to say to them. They do not dominate by igniting the light of some extraordinary intellect, but speak magic words that awaken voices in all that is human—so that those who want to listen are also able to listen to their own inner wisdom. They know but one great happiness: they

know but one great joy: to let themselves and others become deeply aware that Beauty is so near, that Truth is so open, and that Goodness is so uncontrived. They know but one great sorrow: to see people rushing past their nearby Beauty, chasing after ideals far removed from all reality; to see them feverishly searching for truths because they do not dare to face the naked Truth so close at hand; to see them struggle to be "good" in complicated ways, while Life itself is so good to those who believe.

Life itself is good to those who believe, because Life lives for those who believe. The *individual* is not called to live in and of itself; it is called to exist as material to be inspired by Life, just as marble exists to serve as the material for the sculptor's inspiration. And just as marble only begins to radiate life when it yields to the sculptor's hand, so too does life awaken in the *individual* only when it ceases striving and asserting itself, and instead—in humble surrender—reveals **Personality** through the inspiration of the one Universal Life, which lives because it is, by nature, called to live; which lives because it must live... and that is Fate. Whoever calls this weakness

must also call Jesus weak—He who did not try to escape His death, but embraced His tragic fate. Whoever calls this weakness must call Socrates weak—he who calmly drank the cup of poison with manly resolve. Yet the grave of Jesus was filled with miraculous power, and even now the **Person** of Socrates is mighty wisdom.

True human power is not about *individual* domination, but about a **personal**, All-Human (Almensch), universal "ability". Only when *individual* ability is nothing more than humble obedience to **personal** ability, does the Human come to life. And this is his power: to let the facts and people around him be illuminated by the one, universal, Eternal Light — to let them be ordered, to let them be justified by the one, eternal Creative Power. Amidst the chaos of a bickering world, he experiences order. Amidst time, he lives in eternity — visible to all who are able to see. And eternity becomes most visible precisely where ***un****emotional people* (**on**ontroerde menschen) see only death, or at best, reflect on "*individual* immortality". It is there that he makes Eternity shine forth — not as an endless stretch of countless years, but as the ever-present, radiant, unified NOW. To him, the *emotional*

people (ontroerings-menschen) — whom he saw calmly looking death in the face, the holiest symbols of death, only "existing" *individuality*, and "living" **Personality**. To him is given the grace of standing at the deathbed of such people, because Life lives for him, because Life blesses his fortunes. And in moments of weakened insight, he asks his dead for help:

"Grant me all-human light, all-human strength,
my beloved dead:
That I may live as you have died.

How humbly your meek body rests in the mighty Earth, how it surrenders to her, and lets itself be filled with her warmth!

You have taken with you into the Earth-life, with your body and your blood, every thought that had truly become flesh and blood in you.

The Earth strips the seed of its shell and lets the innermost life of the seed grow into laughing flowers.

So too, she strips your thoughts, dear dead — your flesh-and-blood thoughts — and lets them grow into the Stirring of the one Human Soul.

Let me lose life, wise dead, that I may gain the Life, the eternal Life."

III. LOVE OF TRUTH AND CURIOSITY.

Second objection to belief in Fate:

Whoever sees the one Fated Principle in all things will, over time, lose interest in the multiplicity and separateness of things; he will begin to settle for general, superficial knowledge, and eventually lose all sense for thorough, solid understanding.

This objection speaks entirely in the spirit of our childish awe for "scholarship." We are so accustomed to looking up to those who "know a lot" that it becomes difficult for us to grasp that the quantity of things one knows has nothing to do with the depth or solidity of true understanding. But this difficulty exists only because we so easily let ourselves be impressed by the sheer hard work it takes to "know a lot." We have been swept along by the plebeian—and thankfully vanishing—spirit of the age, which exalted the slavish virtue of "diligent work" to the skies, because it knew no other virtue.

But there is something else besides “diligent industry and tireless effort.” There is also—I hardly dare say it in a world of industrious toilers and tireless researchers—there is also: happiness, human happiness. And that does not come at the call of diligent industry and tireless effort. The toilers and researchers will smile at this: “I am happy; satisfaction and work bring happiness.” I don’t believe you, diligent workers—you “serve” too much. And when you’re not working, you grow bored too quickly. You serve in your duties to such an extent that service has become the core of your being, and you grow restless the moment there’s nothing to serve. I’ll gladly admit with you that youthful recklessness once shouted too loudly about “freedom and joy”—but now, after all the fresh life that has broken free from its chains, now that man at last dares to enjoy—right here, on this earth—you can no longer honestly be happy in the solemn performance of usefulness and toil. No, you’re fooling yourselves—your relentless labor is a “healing syrup for pleasure,” a way to pacify your soul, which accuses you the moment it’s allowed to speak on a day off. Boredom is the soul’s accusation. If you dare to let your soul be free from duty and work, without fear of its sharp cry of boredom, only then are you

truly happy, only then can you celebrate in truth. In duty and work, your life is merely “bearable,” not “joyful.”

My soul now has a completely free day, and it delights in playing with your words, diligent working people. Not to convince you—you have no time to listen to its play anyway. But because it delights in playing, for its own sake and for the sake of its kindred, it plays.

You sneer, saying “superficial” knowledge, and you pride yourselves on “solid” knowing. But I say: only knowledge of the surface can be solid, sound, and thorough knowledge. Only knowledge of the surface can be Truth; all other knowledge is merely curious probing into things that do not truly, thoroughly concern us—things that do not touch our happiness. All knowledge outside the knowledge of what is freely, naturally given on the surface is... superficial.

There stands a beautiful statue—say, the Venus de Milo. I know that Venus if I know its surface—that is, when I clearly see its surface. Would you call that "superficial" knowledge? Then go ahead—look inside this Venus and see if it's hollow or solid, rap it with your knuckles to find out whether it's made of wood or of stone. I'd prefer to look at the surface,

the curvature of the surface, the bending of the lines, the entire movement of the surface. For that is how I see the statue. If you do not know—spiritually and with your heart—that this Venus is a statue, then you will peer inside it and rap it with your knuckles. What does its surface matter to you then? But if you are capable of knowing the truth that stands before you—that image—then you will not “investigate” it with exacting diligence; you will simply see—patiently and without pretense. And through that seeing, you will become a better, happier human being.

Yes, I readily grant you this: you are not so naïve, diligent workers with tireless effort, that you would prefer not to regard the Venus de Milo as an "image". But your obsession with knowing and doing so much has made you forget that all of creation is an image *). You no longer know that. Perhaps you still mumble something about creation being an image of God, or something like that—but you no longer know it with your heart and

*) Image, in the strict sense: embodiment, not imitation. An imitation is a copied model, something different from the original. An embodiment is a form of life—one that remains united with the life that gives it form. In this way, all true art is an embodiment of the artist’s emotion, not merely an imitation.

soul, that creation is an image—and so you keep looking into creation, and you keep dissecting it... in order to understand it. You dissect plants, and animals, and humans. Yes, humans too. You stick Latin names on their bones and, holding a skull in your hand, you study the human being. If you knew that creation is an image, then you would see it—you would see the naturally visible surface of plants and animals and people. You would see creation itself, which is one image.

No, doctor, I am not speaking now about the usefulness of your anatomical studies. Keep your usefulness—I don't begrudge you it. No, natural scientist, I am not speaking now about the precision of your science. Keep your precision—I don't begrudge you that either. I am speaking now about Truth, and Truth is not some grand word for me, but a sacred tone from a sacred life. And that is why my respectfully playful soul says through me:

Truly, creation is an image.

One fated Life lives in the universe. The universe is the shining forth of that Life.

And that shining—that is what I want to see, on the surface of things. Where else does light shine, if not on the surface of things?

I want to see the colors of the flowers—their red,

and blue, and yellow, and so many indescribable shades. Let them color my eyes with the one Life of creation.

I want to see the clouds—the gray, the white, the golden, the unnamable ones. Let them fill my mind with the one visibly fated Truth.

And I want to see the plains—the open, the wide, wide plains of my country, so wide that sky and land become a single image. Let them fill my spirit with the one Wisdom, one in All.

People search for the "interior" of things when they are no longer capable of perceiving the intimacy of things. You have examined the interior of flowers, scientist. But have you ever seen their intimacy? Then you may one day feel ashamed of your eager dissections—and your shame will be wisdom. You have seen the interior of man, doctor. But have you ever reflected on the intimacy of his soul? Then you may one day feel ashamed of your learned anatomical studies—and your shame will be wisdom. True shame is the gentle gesture of young wisdom. The wise are ashamed of all *curiosity* (nieuwsgierigheid)—ashamed of the desire to see what is not the naturally visible surface of creation. But the naturally-visible is

seen without shame by the fully matured wise person, because curiosity lies far behind him.

That is why mature Truth lives within him.

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Truth — what is Truth?

We don't need to pronounce this word with dramatic emphasis, like a preacher fond of long-winded speech. But something reverent must tremble within us when we say "Truth." Otherwise, we do not understand the meaning of the word and should only speak of "reality" or "correctness" or "exactness" — but not of "Truth." Accurate, exact knowledge of a reality is not yet Truth. Would you call someone a knower of Truth who knew precisely how many paving stones lie in every city in the world? No — you might call him "clever," and diligent in his counting — but a knower of Truth must be reverent. The reverent knower of Truth does not look at things in just any manner; he does not count paving stones — that is beneath him.

What is Truth? Think of a reality that inspires reverence in you, and then answer. Or ask yourself whether my answer does not give voice to what already whispers in the innermost part of yourself.

Truth is the reverent knowing of a sacred reality.

Put differently: Truth is the kind of knowledge of a reality that awakens or fosters human life within us. Human life—not the life of a person, not the small, limited life of individual particularity—but the eternal, original, universally human life. Truth is to a human being what water is to a flower. The water refreshes the flower's nature, makes it grow and open, expand... even unto death. So it is also with Truth for the human being. Truth may appear in the white-and-blue robes of the pure Madonna, it may flash forth in terror as Jehovah, Lord of Hosts, or it may reveal itself in the colors of a national flag. In a thousand other forms, Truth may come to us—but this is its one essential act: it calls the Human Being to life. Always and everywhere, the True brings life to **Personality**—and death to the *individual*. Sometimes the individual may die for the Truth, but it must always die through the Truth. Otherwise, it is not Truth. This is the only unmistakable sign that Truth has come into you: that you no longer live, but that the Human Being lives in you. The Human Being does not

always have the same name. With different voices, the one Truth can be confessed: “I no longer live—Mana lives in me,” or: “I no longer live—Jehovah lives in me,” or: “I no longer live—the fatherland lives in me,” or: “I no longer live—but Christ lives in me.” Christ is the only name of Truth that holds absolute and universal meaning, because Christ expresses in one word: Human and God, that is, Human and Fate, Human and the Absolute. For whoever truly says “God” in uncontrived deep stirring says nothing other than: fate, known and acknowledged with the heart—fate to which the individual willingly offers itself unto death.

Now, surely, you understand the distinction between curiosity and love of Truth:

Love of Truth lives in **personality** — Curiosity lives in the *individual*.

Love of Truth cherishes what it experiences as fated visibility: the born surface of things, which is one with the soul of all things. Curiosity seeks fabricated visible things—those we do not experience as naturally visible.

Love of Truth is reverent and modest. It lives in the heart of the wise person, who does not “seek” Truth, but accepts it. Is Truth not everywhere? Does it not show itself, of its own accord, everywhere? Is the whole, vast, earthly

appearance not the Image of Life? — Curiosity is intrusive... it has even cut open the human body and shamelessly counted the ribs.

Love of Truth is a natural grace, like all true virtue. On an individual level, we cannot positively achieve it—it cannot be forced. But we can, negatively, remove the obstacles to it—especially its most persistent enemy: curiosity. Then it will grow in us through grace, through the power of Truth itself, which reveals itself because it must reveal itself. Thus, devotion to Truth is not an eager search for difficult-to-discover things, but a human self-emptying—that is, a sovereign disdain for curiosity. Let the curiosity of lesser people serve where it is useful—but despise it as the strange, conceited laborer who has nothing to do with your true humanity, your happiness, or your sorrow.

Then you are a lover of Truth, and happiness will be granted to you: to see the Human Being face to face, and to be seen face to face by the Human Being.

To see the Human Being.... with that, I touch upon the kind of truth-loving knowledge of humanity in the only

true sense of the word. To know a person as Truth is to see that person as an image of creation—in other words, to behold the surface of their being as one with their soul. Whoever knows what has "happened" to a person, what a person has done, and even what they think—knows only the story of that person. They are not yet a knower of the person themself. But whoever can truly see the surface of a human being—their natural appearance, their countenance—that person is a knower of humanity. The tension of a human countenance, its lines, its play of color and light, is the living appearance of the soul—the human face is the human being. That face is not something to be "diligently studied"; it cannot be discovered through scientific psychology, psychiatry, or historical analysis. All of that is just labor—and for the soul's values, all labor is laborer's work—perhaps useful labor, but still laborer's work. And it is precisely those who have worked hard who can know this best—if they have the courage to truly assess their own work, and honestly admit: The grace of Life, which comes and goes without our deserving, that alone brings forth Truth, love of Truth, and the happiness of Truth.

IV. EQUANIMITY AND INDIFFERENCE.

Third objection to belief in Fate:

The Believer in Fate must inevitably fall into self-denial, which is the essence of all life-denying asceticism.

We have come to understand belief in Fate as a thought born from *deep emotional stirring* (ontroeringsgedachte). Whoever has truly realized that this emotional stirring is the nobility of a human being—that all ennoblement of the human spirit is born of this inner movement, and that such stirring cannot give rise to anything ignoble—need not fear being ensnared by a form of asceticism that violates life. In fact, false asceticism, into which the non-stirred person is so easily tempted when contemplating God or Fate, should be for us a "touchstone of authenticity." The [Dutch] word "ascese" — originally meaning “exercise” or “training”— has, in theological usage, become the standard term for the denial of the individual, motivated by moral or religious convictions. True, noble asceticism,

which I have also called "mystical morality," is the asceticism of *emotion* (ontroering); it is the psychological dying-off of the petty, bustling *individual* separateness, through the greater life of the **Personal**, which lives in *emotion*. But there also exists a false asceticism, which tries to imitate that dying-off. There is no trace of real emotion in it. It is born from—and commanded by—disguised vanity; it is ruled by a coldly calculating and reckless intellect. Its result is not a true death of the individual self, but a suppression of it: the self remains, sneakily submissive, lurking in its iron cage—perhaps tamed, but not dead. Whoever calls this "*perinde ac cadaver*" *) is merely uttering a grand phrase.

An excellent example of false asceticism is given to us by the Jesuit order. It is absolutely not my intention to once again accuse the Jesuits of all the crimes that have rightly or wrongly been attributed to them. I am not speaking about Jesuits themselves, but about the Jesuitical ascetic system. Ignatius, the founder of the Jesuit order, expresses the spirit of the order very clearly in his book, titled: "Exercitia

*) *perinde ac cadaver* – Latin for "just like a corpse" (Jesuit expression for absolute obedience)

Spiritualia," that is, "Spiritual Exercises." This work begins with a very rationalistic, intellectual, completely unemotional argument "proving" that, in order to reach his "purpose" as a human being, a person must kill off all particular, individual preferences or aversions. "At the end of the first argument," it says, "we must therefore make ourselves indifferent toward all created things." Note carefully: "We must therefore make ourselves indifferent." I do not stress just this brief text, but interpret it in the spirit of the entire argument: Your intellect commands you to serve God alone and to deny any of your particular desires or aversions. Therefore: if your individual self raises its head, crush that head beneath your heel — make yourself indifferent. — See, this is not the dying off of the individual through the unfolding of a universal emotional life (ontroering); it is not true equanimity, but fake equanimity. It is the pursuit of indifference. It is the suppression of individuality based on rational calculation. Suppression, I say… the Jesuit, in all his asceticism, upholds an individual God, and thus sanctions the individual as such. Do you see the individual lurking in its iron cage? Your reason says… but your reason itself, which commands you to become indifferent — your reason is an individual,

a commanding — indeed, despotic — individual. So please, do not speak of "*perinde ac cadaver*". In such asceticism, one part of the individual suppresses another, but the individual... lies tamed, lurking in its cage. And it will break loose and call itself Authority, and preach in the name of God; it will command that the human being be reduced to an emotionless servant.

Let me be clear: this is by no means to say that reason is altogether to be rejected. No — Rousseau is deeply mistaken when he says: *"L'homme qui pense est un animal dépravé"* *). But reason cannot create; it is not called to rule, but to serve. We have already examined the distinction between love of truth and mere curiosity. Well then — *reason* is called to serve the truth-loving soul, that is, the purified will. More specifically: it is *to detect and expose* all curiosity within us, and surrender it to the sovereign, annihilating contempt of the creative soul. This service is the humble work of a *spy*, and as long as busybody curiosity is not yet dead, that service — however humble — remains necessary. And it remains a very active, exhausting service.

But when our curiosity, through the inspiration

*) "The man who thinks is a depraved animal."

of emotion, is expanded to the point of death! — then nobility also lives in the intellect, through the nobility of the soul. Then the intellect can and may perform a more noble service. Then it can and may become an instrument for the soul at play. Then it may even bear a more noble name and be called “reason.”

Even then, however, there remains within reason an important form of “control,” which prevents reckless curiosity from rising again — just as in every instrument, a mindful “technique” continues to remind, as is also necessary for even the most mature artists.

Reason is then like a well-tuned harp. Its concepts are taut strings, resonating with certainty, finely tuned by the ever-clear distinction between love of truth and mere curiosity. Now let the Human Being play upon it; now he may let himself go, now he may receive and inspire all that Fate sends him, now he may be “equanimous.” His equanimity shall, singing in pure emotion, prove to be the only true human freedom; the “service” of reason is no longer a detestable espionage but a humble receiving of creative life.

And thus the equanimous soul sings its concept-song of freedom:

I will tell you what freedom is…

There is no heavier burden than hesitation. Who can sing themselves free when the weight of hesitation presses down?

I cannot hesitate, I cannot choose—I must, must—that is my Fate, my Will.

It must act within me—but it must act joyfully, because it must act free from fearful hesitation.

Freedom is my joyful necessity. Whoever believes they can "choose" can in truth only "hesitate"—and is a servant who needs a command in order to act.

Freedom is known to the true human being, to Man and to Woman.

Where a man is truly a Man, and a woman truly a Woman, there Love lives—and what is Love, if not joyful Necessity?

Can Love choose? Can Love hesitate?

Does it need a command in order to act?

Love creates because it must create, and sacrifices because it must sacrifice.

But joyfully it creates, and joyfully it sacrifices—thus I praise her light freedom.

As free from choice and command as the rain falls,
and the clear sky blues,

As free from hesitation as the Earth laughs her free laughter of flowers,

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So free is everything that lives humanly—that lives as man, and as woman.

Dare to know that All must be, O human—then you will learn joyful necessity,

Then you will become free!

The intellectual person senses, from a great distance, the beauty of this equanimous, all-accepting, joyful necessity. And he tries to imitate that equanimity. He too wants unshakable calm, and so he rationally tames all his emotions, keeps them harmless and under control. His intellect poses as a little providence over his feelings — but it remains merely intellect; it does not become inspired, singing reason. He may perhaps achieve a cold indifference — maybe. But the living equanimity of joyful necessity never enlightens him. He too must — all that exists must. But his necessity remains a servant's bondage — or a cold command of authority. He may vainly boast of his "faithful" service or the strength of his commanding voice. Do not trust him. Behind him weeps a soul that feels all his serving and commanding as heavy shackles. Only in freedom can the soul live its life — because its life is love.

V. RELIGION.

The Belief in Fate has its periods of intense strength, its periods of decline, and its periods of revival. The revival of belief in Fate is precisely what is expressed in the word religion. That is why I define the concept of "religion" as follows: Religion is the revival of belief in Fate. This definition can be stated prior to any detailed historical investigation, and full-blooded historians will likely, for that very reason, be inclined to reject it. But they would be wrong. For anyone who intends to examine a human phenomenon "historically" always brings with them—before their historical investigation—a concept of the phenomenon, whether they wish to or not, whether they have clarified that concept by a definition or not. Whoever, for instance, wishes to conduct historical studies on the phenomenon of "visual art" already knows—at least roughly—what they mean by "visual art." Otherwise, they would not be able to focus specifically on that phenomenon, and not on some other. Now, in itself, it is far better

to have a precise definition of that preliminary concept before investigating the phenomenon historically, than to begin with a vague notion. Because: **1**. A well-defined preliminary concept will keep the historical investigation focused on what actually needs to be examined and will prevent unnecessary and harmful straying into side paths, and **2**. A well-defined preliminary concept of a specific human phenomenon is indeed possible prior to detailed historical research.

That such a clearly outlined preliminary concept must shed light on historical research, no one will doubt. If, for instance, I have a sharply defined concept of the human phenomenon “visual art,” then I will certainly gain easier insight into the essential history of visual art than if I have only a vague concept of visual art, which should really be called nothing more than a “hunch.”

But—is a sharply defined concept of a human phenomenon even possible before detailed historical research? Isn’t it necessary to possess a great deal of factual material in order to—first by guessing and probing—gradually arrive at a sharply defined concept? I answer: “a great deal” of factual material is not necessary—what is necessary is "clearly expressive"

and complete factual material. One fact can speak clearly; a thousand facts may stammer and only invite “guessing.” One fact can fully reveal to me the essence of a phenomenon; a thousand facts might show me only secondary details. And when it comes to understanding a specifically human phenomenon, we don’t have to search far for clearly expressive, complete factual material. A specifically human phenomenon is not something that merely “existed” a long time ago and has been hopelessly lost. No—it returns, in its heights and its lows, in the full movement of its development, and it remains with us in our immediate surroundings, indeed, in our very selves. As long as the human being is human, they carry within themselves—consciously or unconsciously—the essence of these phenomena. As long as the human being is human, we do not need to search for their phenomena in old documents or ancient relics, as though they could be found nowhere else. — I can investigate this phenomenon historically—in this case, “historically” in the broadest sense of the word, not only as historical in the usual sense, but also as prehistorical,

I can dig into the earth and there uncover remains of human beings, as well as remains of so-called pre-human creatures. Natural scientists have indeed dedicated themselves to such historical and prehistorical research with persistent effort. We know what the result has been. Natural scientists are now, by and large, of the opinion that the human being did not suddenly emerge from nothing, but developed out of nature as an expression of nature. This is the essential content of their belief. They may differ on details, certainly, but the core of their hypothesis is this: the human being has evolved from nature as an expression of the one, unified nature. Over this essential idea, a fierce struggle has been, and continues to be, waged—a struggle of belief. And it is precisely this core issue that concerns us as human beings: it touches our dignity, our happiness, our very nature. But now the question: was all that historical and prehistorical research necessary in order to arrive at the important conclusion that the origin of the human being is not a creation from nothing, but the result of a becoming, of an evolution? History itself says: no. What we now call, in short, the "theory of evolution" was already embraced by thinkers centuries before Jesus. Heraclitus, Anaximenes, Anaximander, Thales,

Empedocles—they all already knew, were already convinced of what modern scholars now cautiously refer to as a "hypothesis." And long before Darwin attempted to prove the theory of evolution, Meister Eckhart had already said: Moses may write that the creatures were successively created from nothing, but Moses knew better—the world has developed. Why were those ancient thinkers able to know, before all historical and prehistorical research, what modern natural scientists now cautiously suspect with great probability, after diligently sifting through vast amounts of factual material? Because the ancients were able to see and think—and they also had access to factual material, just like modern natural scientists. The origin of the human being—anyone who wants to understand this phenomenon need not excavate clearly speaking and complete factual material from deep within the earth. For that, living material is available, fresh and present right near us. The origin of the human being—a man, a woman, a child, and there he is. That living material, the ancients let work upon them while it was alive, and the result was the theory of evolution—essentially the same as that of modern natural science. The ancient method was less complicated, but more reliable than the modern one, because it was more truth-loving and less driven by curiosity.

The ancients did not dig, did not sift, did not speculate—but what nature offered them of itself, they observed truthfully, patiently, reverently, and they saw clearly. The child came into being, then as now, in its mother's womb, grew there, emerged, and developed into an adult human with natural necessity, within and around itself the one Fated Life of the one Nature. That the Ancients knew—that knowledge they accepted and allowed their soul to absorb fruitfully. "Everything flows," said Heraclitus twenty-five centuries ago, "everything lives, everything develops—humans too."

I repeat our definition: Religion is the revival of faith in Fate. — Where can we find the clear-speaking and complete factual material for this specifically human phenomenon, religion? We need not look far; it lives in our immediate proximity—it is the living human being himself, his soul-life itself. His soul-life—we shall not now be curious and go in search of the narrative of individual facts and details. The one great fact, the one true history of every human soul, speaks so clearly to us and tells us so completely what it seeks, what it does not find, and what it unfailingly comes to accept again and again.

By nature, every human being is a believer in Fate. Does a newborn child not surrender to the guiding forces of nature? Does it not instinctively drink the mother's milk, made necessary by life itself? Yet, as soon as reason awakens, the human individual becomes periodically seized by fear of Fate. It tries to resist, creates the illusion of a “free” will, invents supernatural beings from whom it hopes to gain protection against Fate. But every period of fear ends with the realization that the most beautiful part of that so-called “free” will, the most beautiful aspect of those supernatural beings… is the very same Fate it sought to escape. That attempt to flee now reveals itself as a pitifully tragicomic struggle—and once again, the human being surrenders, not to what he was seeking, but to what always comes to him: Fate. After every period of fear, his faith in Fate is reborn—and he need not mourn his repeated attempts to escape. For with each revival, his belief in Fate grows warmer and more intimate. His consciously re-experienced Necessity becomes a more joyful Necessity each time, until he calls his Fate by the most beautiful names: Love, Freedom, God. For he does not seek Fate—Fate seeks him,

and Fate is no less certain, no less powerfully creative in the human being than it is in the earth, where it causes flowers to grow so surely and so beautifully, ever continuing to create, inexhaustibly.

Religion comes from re-ligare, that is: to bind again. Religion therefore literally means: repeated binding. As a specifically human phenomenon, religion is thus: the human being's renewed act of binding and being bound, the renewed conscious Necessity = revival of belief in Fate.

Western humanity, insofar as it has been "believing," has always understood that the revival of faithful consciousness is not merely a steady progression, but also, as a result of that steady progression, a sudden recognition of a life-giving principle of faith. By "conversion," for instance, we have always meant something sudden, a complete reversal, a revolution of the soul, the birth of a new human being within the human being — rightly called rebirth — a reawakening of the already present consciousness of faith. By "redemption," we have always understood a liberation from the burdens of the soul, a purification from the stains of the soul, through the illumination of Grace, through the power of a life-giving principle of faith—for example, "the blood of

the Savior." That view was correct. For every revival, which truly deserves to be called a revival, is a birth following a period of growth—not merely a gradual growth alone.

After the religious revival, belief in Fate lives on and grows for a time with relative steadiness. During that period, the human being remains vitally connected; he has entered into a "Covenant" with the Life of Fate. Thus, we speak of the "Old Covenant" of the Jews after their deliverance from paganism, in comparison to the "New Covenant" after the conversion of the human soul's consciousness to the Christ. The expression of the Covenant is the continual celebration of the "Sacrifice," so that the "Sacrifice" changes upon the establishment of a higher Covenant. The Jews celebrated a different sacrifice than the followers of Christ.

Now see how simple the meaning of the "Sacrifice" becomes once we understand: Pure Thought = Emotion = Faith in Fate. Pure thought is truly human intellectual life, which loves Truth above all, without regard to individual opinion. Emotion is truly human life of admiration, which loves Beauty above all, without regard to individual feeling—which is always tainted by self-interested motives hostile to beauty. Belief in Fate is truly human

heartfelt knowing, which loves the fated-living and re-living Human in all things, without regard to the individual. The offering, then, is not a giving from one individual to another, but an expression of the annihilation of the individual. Thus, the Jews burned incense, poured out wine, or slaughtered animals—it was individual annihilation in a fairly primitive form. In the same way, the Catholic priest causes Jesus to take the form of humble bread and wine—it is individual annihilation in a less primitive way. So too will the new Believer in Fate clearly know and experience in profound emotion that every individual is but an insignificant condition for the resonance of the All-Life, which is reborn in us as the All-Human **Personality**, the ever-living one Christ—it is *individual* annihilation ongoing in life and in death, arising wholly from the innermost of the human soul; it is the All-Human Offering, destroying all that smacks of *individual* valuation. Paul already knew that Offering when he said: "I no longer live, but Christ lives in me." He already knew that Offering when he spoke of the birth of Christ, the new Human, within him. He knew that Offering when he branded all exaltation of the human *individual*

as illusion, thinking of God, the one "in whom we live, move, and have our being."

But “Christianity” has still clung to the *individual*, and condemns all who do not kneel before a personal God.

Thus now sounds the renewal of Paul’s word: God is Fate, God’s Image is the Universe.

If you wish to see God, look at the universe — but look at it as you would look at a statue: contemplatively beholding its intimate surface, not superficially and curiously probing for its naturally hidden insides.

Christ is Fate become conscious in humanity. If you wish to see Christ, look at the human being as a line of the universe, a plane of the universe, a color of the universe. Contemplate the human being in such a truth-loving way, so free from all curiosity, that you see his freedom as the freedom of sky and clouds, that you see his love as the rapture of Sun and Earth.

Then your seeing becomes a mathematical faith, certain and powerful and true.

Then your seeing becomes soul-knowledge: *sophia*. Then the Man is revealed to you in all things, and in all things, the Man, *Christ*. — *Christosophia*.

VI. CHRISTOSOPHICAL MORAL DEFINITIONS.

By “morality,” I do not mean the totality of proprieties and improprieties, dependent on customs, by which people regulate their behavior according to relatively fixed norms in order to facilitate and make social interaction more pleasant. That is politeness, not morality. Politeness is neither in accordance with nor in opposition to morality. It stands outside of it.

By “morality,” I also do not mean the totality of “rights” and “duties” derived from civil laws and sanctioned by state authority. Regardless of whether such rights are true rights and such duties true obligations — state laws do not make them "moral".

By “morality,” I mean: the free judgment of the soul, which, independent of any external power, assesses human good and human evil according to no other norm than the naturally self-evident human nature itself.

That Christosophy does not recognize laws of power or commands of power as "morality" is self-evident. Laws and commands of power stem from an individual or — which amounts to the same thing — from multiple individuals. Since, for Christosophic evaluation of values, the **personality** is everything and the *individuality* is nothing, it can never "morally" revere a command of power, which is, by its very nature, individual. Christosophy recognizes commandments only in the sense of: a vital requirement of personal virtue.

Christosophy, of course, makes no "propaganda" for personal virtues (for propaganda is the power of suggestion of the individual as such), but allows its thought of *inner stirring* (ontroering) to shine through human life, in order to see and speak the personal virtues truthfully. In this way, it offers definitions of human virtues, as seen through inner stirring — in other words, definitions of morality.

Christosophy really acknowledges only one virtue: the radiance of **personality**. However, that virtue may manifest under various conditions and circumstances; it may have to fulfill its calling as a sustained inner stirring, alongside and in contrast to various emotions. Thus, it takes on different aspects,

different names; thus it can be defined in various ways. I will take the most common names by which people are accustomed to describe virtues as a starting point for a few Christosophical moral definitions.

Accordingly, I will discuss the following, in order: Piety, Modesty, Courage, Justice, Forgiveness, Purity, Obedience.

Piety.

Piety is considered a highly valued human virtue. In general, piety means: a faithful communion with God. But what is piety for the Christosopher?

The Christosopher does not acknowledge an individual supernatural God who can choose between this or that, neither in the primitive form of a long-bearded, dignified man with a golden crown on his grey hair, nor in the philosophically refined and subtly civilized form of an almighty, all-knowing, all-good Spirit who reigns omnipotently. In other words, the Christosopher is not a theist—he is an atheist. Yet still, a pious atheist. When he hears the sound “God” spoken by

the mouth of a deeply believing theist, and listens to it with his own emotion, he hears something in that sound which also rises up from his own soul, and which he listens to reverently and devoutly. When a theist says “God,” he says something beyond all theism, even against all theism. “Will,” he says, “against which no one can resist... not even God Himself.” Even the theistic God, for example, cannot lie or deceive, because His Will can only will the Truth. “Power,” he says, “against which no one can resist... not even God Himself.” Even the theistic God cannot realize an absurdity, because His Power is one Power. Yes, when the theist, with true faith, says “God,” he is saying “Fate.” And he says it reverently, he says it with joyful necessity, with free resignation.
The Christosopher takes over that sound as well — he too is devout. But his devotion is free from all idolization of the individual. His piety is a reverent surrender to Fate. Whoever claims that such devotion leads to “apathy,” to a “weakening of the will,” to a mere “letting-go,” should consult the history of the Muslims. Indeed, true devotion kills the fear of individual dangers — which is something entirely different from weakness of will or apathy.

Question: How can a human being have reverence

for Fate? Surely we only have reverence for a venerable Personality?

The Christosopher answers:

Fate is, for me, not merely a concept. A concept I can understand, perhaps admire, but I cannot revere it.

Fate is, for me, not an Individual, infinitely exalted above all other individuals, almighty and all-knowing — such an Individual I might fear and serve, but I cannot revere it devoutly. And were such an infinitely exalted Individual to stoop to me and show kindness — I would not trust it, and I would think: deceitful is that Infinitely Exalted One, who flatters me, a nobody, with favors.

But indeed, Fate is for me true Personality, god-human, worship-worthy Personality.

Behold the history of Fate, seen in reverence:

It was Cosmic Emotion from the beginning. It swelled forth into countless planets, and the planets were its body; their surface was tension, unceasing tension of the emotion of the cosmos. But when the time came, as it had to come, the planetary curves receded, wrinkled with age, and the

planetary body relaxed from body-of-creation into image-of-creation. The Cosmic Emotion continued to stir and embodied itself in plants, which, when the time came, as it had to come, relaxed and became image. The Cosmic Emotion continued to stir and embodied itself in animals, which, when the time came, as it had to come, relaxed and became image. The Cosmic Emotion continued to stir and embodied itself in the human being — most people also have their time of relaxing and becoming mere image. But some people remain more than image; they remain embodiment of the one Emotion. For they know — know bodily — they feel with thought and think with feeling, that their emotion is the one Emotion. This is their eternal life: that they know the Cosmic Emotion as consciously reflective within them. This is their eternal life: that they know the Christ, the God born into human Personhood. This is their eternal life: that they know no other life to live than the life of God.

O piety without peer, which does not serve a God, but brings a God to birth! Which clings not fearfully to a limited individual, but embodies itself wherever it wills! Thus is the pious one immortal,

and knows himself to be immortal, because he, living God's life, can everywhere reshape matter into the property of his soul, his body. Thus, the God of the devout is a personal God, resonating through and shining within his individual being, and through the individuals beside him and those who come after, with the one Emotion in All. The God of the devout is one power, for no power exists outside His Power. The God of the devout is one wisdom, for no wisdom exists outside His Wisdom. The God of the devout is one love, for no love offers sacrifice outside His Love, which offers all individuals.

And here is the story of my recognition of Christ:

I saw that people were always seeking and investigating, and I found them unwise. How unwise it is to always seek and investigate, so long as so much glory gives itself freely to be seen on Earth. Then I wanted to become wise, and I learned to see what offers itself to be seen. The naturally visible Earth became my Bible. O, read no Bible until you can see .... And when I had reverently experienced the Earth as the image of God, I learned to see the Human. Then I learned to completely surrender to naive seeing. At first my naïve seeing was still primitive, but it

outgrew its primitive nature — it became contemplative, and remained naïve. Then it was revealed to me that wisdom is: contemplative naïveté. And now my whole individual self dies as an Offering to the wise Christ, who, by inspiring me, teaches and redeems me. Naïve and spontaneous like the Earth, and with his mind tensioned in contemplation like an impassive mathematician — entirely virginal naïveté and entirely masculine contemplation — thus wise is the Christ, the God-Man, one Life in the All, become one Person through the truly offered individuals of humanity.

Modesty.

In reviewing what I said about “Piety,” I notice that I must still give further clarification of the distinction between “image” and “body,” and of the concept of reverence. I used the concept of reverence in the very definition of “Piety”: I said reverent surrender. Therefore, I will first elaborate on this concept, and postpone for a moment the clarification of the distinction between “image” and “body.”

I wrote above “Modesty”, because reverence presupposes modesty as a continual

state of mind. Modesty is a constant virtue, which can always and everywhere be practiced; reverence is an exceptionally exalted expression of modesty — modesty in celebration; reverence rises, in rare and fortunate moments, to a state of wholly unfeigned spiritual rapture.

Thus, modesty is the visible aspect of virtue in everyday life. Which by no means implies that it is an "everyday" or commonplace virtue. There are few who are truly modest — only the noble human being is genuinely modest. Usually, people who present themselves as modest are cunning types, who keep to the background so they can quietly lie in wait for an opportunity to be immodest without danger. I have learned to be on guard against everyone whom "people" call modest. I have found that they are almost always quite brazen — as soon as the opportunity arises that allows them to be shameless without any risk to themselves.

Opportunistic critics are usually that kind of people. They are oh so modest — read: sneaky and quiet — until some anonymous person dares to utter a venomous word, or until a majority has been slyly manipulated, and then they break loose — only to

very soon creep back to lurk in their dark, filthy little den, imprisoned by their own bitter jealousy. If you meet someone whom “people” call modest, assume there smolders envy over imagined unrecognized qualities — then you will usually be right. They are much to be pitied, these "crowd"-modests, for they cannot celebrate the feast of reverence — and reverence is such deep happiness. They are much to be pitied, for they cannot celebrate the feast of genuine enthusiasm — and enthusiasm is the near-death of joy.

But let us calmly define. What is modesty, and what isn't it?

Modesty is not looking up to an individual. The Christosopher knows that. For him, the individual is, in the natural order of things, no more than a mere condition. The “crowd"-modests usually look up to another individual. That is disguised vanity. For whoever looks up to an individual would very much like to have incense burned for their own individual self. The shirt is closer than the coat, isn’t it… All that reverence is just an excuse: “That fine man is, after all, my president, my king, my pope, my master, my etc., etc.” Or: “I must have a good ear for music, because I idolize Wagner; I

must understand literature, because I worship Shakespeare...” Whenever I think about great people, I feel a deep compassion. What a humiliation that must be — to be idolized by sycophantic, envious flatterers!

What true modesty is: a deep inner awareness of the worthlessness of the individual as such, and a deep inner awareness of the all-worthiness of the Human Being.

Where the truly modest person sees an individual who eagerly allows themselves to be idolized, he looks away, to avoid witnessing the insult to Humanity — carried out by cringing and craving servility. Where the truly modest person sees a Person, he smiles with the joyful peace of faith, thinking of his God — who so modestly avoids all intrusion, that only few find Him in His mysterious Life. Sometimes he celebrates his reverence, the modest man. Then broad bells ring through his soul and rolling organ tones whisper their Hosanna. Sometimes he celebrates his pure enthusiasm... Life is worth living for one moment of such pure enthusiasm.

Let me tell you a short story about a modest man who celebrated his enthusiasm.

It happened in 1870 in Rome. The Piedmontese

were besieging the “holy city,” and the papal army—a small handful of poorly trained and poorly armed Zouaves—defended it, only for the sake of demonstration, for victory was out of the question. Among those Zouaves was a simple Dutch boy, Alfons Houben. He had climbed up onto a fortress wall and, without any cover, was firing his bullets at the enemy, one by one. The captain ordered him to come down—he wanted to risk as few lives as possible in a “demonstration.” Houben refused. “No, I won’t abandon the Pope like that,” he said—and he kept firing, calmly aiming, silently sure of his Will, shot after shot.

I must briefly note here that our brave Dutchman was very disobedient — “people” would call it immodest. The captain gave orders in the name of papal supreme authority. But Houben did not think of any commanding authority. “God is God and the Pope is His Prophet” — that was his faith. The Pope — for him, the Pope was not an individual. For us, the Pope is an individual; we have looked behind the scenes, we have heard whispers of politics. But for him, the defiant one, the Pope was a color and a sound, a gesture of

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the All-Stirring of God. That man was modest, he was reverent, he was full of fervor.

“Houben, I order you, get down!”

Try giving an order to a man who is in the midst of celebrating his festival of fervor! The brave man did not obey. “Dear the Pope!” he cried, and fell.

A few days later, his mother received his final letter. “Mother, a premonition tells me that I must fall for the Pope. Don’t weep too much. Could I die a more beautiful death?” — — —

People sometimes say that fervor is “abnormal.” Oh yes, a celebration is always something extraordinary, and so is the festival of fervor, while “normal” is ordinary, “normal” is banal. But a heart in which fervor can live is healthy — though not ordinary. Genuine modesty is healthy — even if it is likewise an abnormality in our sadly immodest world.

Courage.

In the previous article, I did not speak very flatteringly about “the public.” But do understand me properly. “The public” still has an inviolable right in determining the meaning of a word. If an individual were allowed to

assign meanings to words arbitrarily—if he were, for instance, to call a house a "book" and a book a "house"—then we would end up in hopeless confusion. A word means what general usage says it means. However, "the public" does not know exactly what it is saying; it does not reflect, it is unconsidered. So, two factors are required in order to determine the precise meaning of a word. **1**. General usage of the language, **2**. Linguistic intuition, through which one perceives what words actually mean according to general usage. If, for example, we want to determine the correct meaning of the word "God," we begin by asking general language usage what the word signifies—removing all the additional meanings that various confessional and non-confessional groups have attached to it through their particular usage. That general meaning is not yet the precise meaning. It is still vague, because the added, constructed meanings have pushed it too far into the background. But if we now let that vague, general meaning work upon us—carefully avoiding the pedantry of once again constructing an additional meaning for the word—then that generally vague meaning becomes clearer and sharper, until it reveals a precise meaning. This contradicts

all constructed meanings, yet it is not satisfied with a minimum—some least common denominator of the various interpretations; on the contrary, it reveals that the pure, unconstructed meaning is precisely the life-force of the word, if only it is allowed to say what it wants to say—even when that contradicts individual interest or collectively held “opinions.” In this way, we listen humbly to the meaning of the word itself. In this way, the word itself can realize itself within us as a living truth. Thus, we liberate the word that the Human Being longs to speak from the constraints of human individuals who distorted its sound with “constructed” meanings.

And now — Courage! What is Courage? The meanings that have been “made” around that word have caused sad confusion. Thus, for example, a “suicide” is by many automatically called a hero, and by others automatically a coward. But what does the word itself mean, apart from all that artificial construction? If you listen to its sound, entirely without self-interest and entirely uncontrived, it will ultimately translate itself as this: Courage is the modest acceptance of unavoidable sorrow.

Suffering is an unyielding Law. We might maliciously call it the "iron" law, or benevolently

the "golden" law — it remains an unrelenting law to which we must submit, whether willingly or unwillingly. We all know this very well — not a single person truly doubts it. And yet — what do most people do? They recoil from suffering, even from unavoidable suffering, and try to escape it. Some resist it, stretching and straining their will and spirit in a hopeless struggle. Others try to flee from it, surrendering to shallow, base entertainment. Still others, worn out by the fight, give in — but with gritted teeth, full of rage over their broken happiness, envious of all who are not yet broken.

Observe an act of resistance against unavoidable suffering — observe it without self-interest, with humility; try to see it without judgment or excuse… Does it resonate in your soul as “courage”? — At a superficial glance, it may appear courageous; it speaks so resolutely: “I will not.” But when it sinks into the deep life of a calm, reflective soul, it takes on the tone of “stubbornness,” “vanity.” And the quiet soul thinks of foolish children who… I will finish that sentence shortly. Would you like me to continue with the rest? Now observe an act of flight from unavoidable suffering — observe it again without self-interest, with humility; strive to see it without

judgment or justification ... Does it resonate in your soul with the word “courage”? — At first glance, it may appear courageous, it keeps repeating: "I won’t, I won’t." But when it sinks into the deeper life of a calm, contemplative soul, it speaks instead as “fearful resistance.” And the quiet soul thinks of foolish children who... Now observe an act of angry surrender to unavoidable suffering — observe it without bias, humbly, and see it without judgment or disguise... Does it reveal itself in your soul as “courage”? At first glance, it might seem brave, it declares with stubborn defiance: "And still, and still, and still I will not resign myself!" But when it sinks into the deep life of a quietly reflective soul, it resounds as “despair.” And the quiet soul thinks of foolish children who...

Childishly foolish is the one who tries to turn aside unavoidable suffering. We all know that very well. And we should not be surprised when that foolishness, growing year by year, from generation to generation, ends in madness: delusions of grandeur, persecution mania, frenzy, and whatever other dreadful names those horrors may bear.

Childishly foolish. — Now I will finish my sentence about those children… I will say nothing extraordinary about them, but do not forget — that these children are, in the end, people,

just like those I compare them with are also very ordinary. Most children possess a kind of foolishness that is quite amusing — because they are only children. When mother is busy with sponge and water, they begin to misbehave. They are afraid of being washed. They hit mother, run away, struggle — until the water has done its job. If mother didn't force them — what little chimney-sweeps they'd become!

Grown-ups who try to escape Unavoidable Suffering are like those foolish children who don't want to be washed. Plainly put: there is something unclean in such people. Because they are always cautious — which is the opposite of transparent. They wrap themselves in artificial secrecy, they lock up their inner life — because everywhere they see the looming threat of suffering. They build opaque walls around themselves, their soul never dares to step outside; there is something in them like the stale air of a room that is always closed. Whoever can sense that psychically dense wall around them suspects the impurity within, and turns away in sorrowful revulsion of the soul. Do not say that Life will always remain a mystery. The Mystery of Life is a mystery only in the sense that it cannot be known through intellect alone;

it must be seen, it must be heard, it must be experienced — remaining a Mystery. But by its nature it reveals itself — not as something to be intellectually understood, but still as a light, a sound, a gesture. Whoever locks up that Mystery prevents it from breathing freely, makes it murky, foul, and opaque. Uncleanliness is a lack of flowing, living interaction between a being and its surroundings, and the soul's relationship with what surrounds a person is inevitably painful. Unavoidable suffering is, in the realm of adult humanity, what water is to a child. Unavoidable suffering purifies. Whoever accepts it with humility learns to suffer purely and beautifully, and therefore also to live purely and beautifully. Whoever does not accept it humbly still suffers, but suffers in an ugly way. Only very beautiful eyes can still discover something beautiful within such suffering. None of this, of course, means that we should accept all suffering passively. Far from it. Accepting avoidable suffering is the mark of a weakling. But the great Suffering of Fate is always creative and re-creative. It liberates everything in us that holds human value; it creates happiness in us that cannot exist without suffering. Perhaps you now ask: what is Unavoidable Suffering? That question is not well posed. Suffering cannot

be precisely defined, nor can what is unavoidable. These terms are self-evident. The question must be posed as follows: Which sufferings in my life are avoidable, and which are blessings of Fate?

Let that question find its answer in your own life. This is certain: every thinking person sees in their life some great suffering that they know with absolute certainty to be unavoidable — a chronic illness, a deformity, the death of a loved one, an unhappy marriage, or... each may fill in their own answer. Humbly accept that Suffering which you already know to be unavoidable. It will purify you and develop within you what I would call the tragic intuition *), which will teach you ever more clearly to distinguish suffering from Fate and suffering that can be avoided. That tragic intuition inspired the great poets when they created their immortal tragedies, glorifying the pain of human life that gives rise to heroes. That tragic intuition will, within you, give birth to the courage to suffer — the only kind of courage that may truly be called heroic.

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*) Tragic = fated, when understood this way. It should not be understood as "terrifying." The tragic is not terrifying, because it is seen through calm, strong stirring. The terrifying is not tragic, because it is perceived through dreaded nervousness.

That tragic intuition will, in the end, teach you to truly perceive the sufferings of others. Sentimental pity will give way to profound compassion — that is, the discovery of something beautiful in all suffering, something beautiful even behind the walls of those opaque ones who refuse to suffer. And your humble acceptance will grow into joyful necessity — into Freedom. Freedom in life and in death. What we commonly call "suicide" is, for most, an act of despair and compulsion. But it may happen that Fate speaks clearly to a person, saying: Now, nothing more beautiful can come to you than death. If Fate speaks so to a courageous person, they will not hesitate, and their death will be a truly free death. To call this “suicide” is a slanderous falsehood; “free death” is the honorable truth.

I told you that there is something psychically unclean about those opaque individuals who dare not suffer — those fools who seek escape from what must be. Perhaps you have heard that, where foolishness has grown into full-blown madness, one of the symptoms of that tragic illness is an irresistible urge to touch — even to consume — things that are disgusting. Learn heartfelt compassion for those poor madmen — they display in sharp colors a

Truth, which, even in such harsh tones, remains true and therefore beautiful: the Truth that free surrender to fated suffering purifies the human being, while forced suffering debases them.

Justice.

The tragic intuition is also the only true sense of justice. It is the conscience, free from all suggestion and external authority. The person with tragic intuition judges — or learns to judge — with pure justice. We called morality a "free judgment of the soul." But before the soul can judge freely and truthfully, it must first be able to see — freely and truthfully — the good and the evil in human actions.

And this is how only the tragically intuitive person sees. All conscious, outward human actions are done to remove or avoid pain. Even the pursuit of pleasure in external acts is, upon closer inspection, nothing more than an escape from pain — usually the pain of boredom. No one seeks pleasure purely for pleasure's sake. Pleasure for its own sake is something a person either has or does not have. If they have it, unasked, it is called happiness; if they do not, they may seek it tirelessly, but

not for the sake of pleasure itself — he seeks it to flee from the pain of its absence . . . .

Yes, all conscious external human actions are done to remove or avoid pain. But the tragically intuitive person knows which pain is Unavoidable Suffering and which is not. That is why he is just in his judgment. He calls all actions that are performed with the individually intended goal of averting Unavoidable Suffering bad. And he calls all actions good that are carried out in free, personal surrender to Unavoidable Suffering. This does not mean that every individually intended goal desecrates a deed — but it does mean that the deepest motive of the good deed is courage, and the deepest root of the bad deed is lack of courage.

All this the tragically intuitive person knows. That is why his soul can speak Justice. That is why he is — or becomes — a just, rightly living person. For even though the soul has no coercive power at its disposal, it is the person himself, the one who speaks Justice; it is his own seeing, his own expression, and for that reason, it must shine through and resonate in all his own actions. The sanction of the soul's Judgment lies, first and foremost, in the soul itself that judges.

v.4.1

Human Justice is to judge and act according to tragic intuition.

Forgiveness.

Forgiveness is not a feeble indulgence. Forgiveness is the faith in the unifying power of the sanction of Justice rooted in the Emotion of the Universe. This faith lives in the tragically intuitive person, because they, in devout humility, perceive Fate as a continuously creative force — an emotion that shapes Beauty, Truth, and Justice even in human actions.

That is why they do not concern themselves with reward or revenge. They act according to the inspiration of their tragic intuition, knowing that by doing so they co-create with the single universal Emotion. They act as their tragic intuition inspires them, knowing it is good because it must be — even if it may seem, in the moment, cruel and heartless.

Only those who have thus appeared cruel will no longer deem Nature unjust because it is “cruel.” All that is tragic is just — and the entire Universe is one vast tragedy.

Purity.

According to common usage, the word “purity” as a virtue especially refers to sexual purity.

After all that has been said, it will not be difficult for us to give a proper definition of purity. We have said that impurity is: a lack of flowing life-connection between a being and its environment. Accordingly, sexual purity is: a flowing life-connection between a being as a sexual being and its environment.

There is nothing so sordid as a locked-away sexual life. From this it does not follow that a man is automatically impure if he does not sexually live with a woman, or that a woman is automatically impure if she does not sexually live with a man. Fate does not allow every pure person to meet the counterpart of their sex — their man or woman — in ordinary reality. Yet still, the pure person will express themselves as a sexual being; they will not imprison their sexuality, but allow it to do what it is naturally called to do: to pair. Pairing is: the dissolution of two individualities into a triune unity of a single Personality. In ordinary reality, the flesh

of the man pairs with the flesh of the woman, and the natural (therefore not individually willed) result will be the trinity: Man–Woman–Child.

In a higher, extraordinary reality (which need not exclude the ordinary one), the woman — in her inspired physicality, in her line, her color, her gesture — will be the most intimate event of male admiration. And the man will create thoughts that fertilize that intimate event, so that the natural result of that extraordinary union becomes: Man–Woman–Thought. And the one Beauty that then lives in that trinity will no longer be the lower aesthetic beauty, mere elegance, or any other superficiality. No, the beauty of union on a higher level is beauty on a higher level: mystical Beauty, showing tones and gestures as expressions of one deep Emotion.

Ascetic repression of the sexual life dulls and numbs a person into a repulsive eunuch. Only tragic sorrow purifies the sexual life, however ordinary or extraordinary it may express itself. Ascetic repression deadens the sense for tragic sorrow. Eunuchs love a "pleasant" life and suffer only the petty miseries of bad tempers. However, as long as the

person is still receptive to tragedy — to experiencing fated pain as fated pain — they will remain pure. They will be Man or Woman.

A fundamental expression of purity is the sense of shame. Oh, how that sense of shame gets misused! The secrecy and hush around sexuality, for most people, is nothing more than disguised vanity, nothing more than the fear of seeming insignificant. Sexual life — both the ordinary and the extraordinary — demands modesty. The unmistakable humor in sexuality lies precisely in its relentless satire of anything that wants to appear solemn.

Erotic love not only brings children into the world, it also re-creates the lovers themselves into childlike people. There is nothing degrading in that. What is degradingly comical is all the pomp and ceremony surrounding sexual life. And rich and good is the laugh that laughs at a solemn wedding.

Listen for a moment, ladies and gentlemen — no, I promise, I won't even think about the fact that you are men and women. Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to tell you briefly what a sense of shame is. Shame is a feeling, ladies, a feeling, gentlemen — so it lives in your body, not in your "conscience" or something like that. And it is a feeling that

the pure person experiences everywhere — even in solitude, isn't that so? A sense of shame that only stays alert in company but, once alone, cozies up and takes a little nap — no, that is not a true sense of shame... And then — shame is shame, ladies and gentlemen, shame. When do we feel ashamed? We feel shame when someone or something accuses us. And what accuses you then, everywhere, always, even in solitude? Don’t look too far, ladies and gentlemen. Your own body accuses you — you, me, all of us. Humanity, in its comical vanity, has said to the body: I don’t acknowledge you, you're just matter, I’ll hide you away... in this way, humanity has insulted its own body. That body now accuses us, ladies and gentlemen, and says: Nature made Women and Men. I respect every modest person who deeply feels that accusation from their own body, and who does not shift that accusation onto some distant god or abstract concept like “decency” just to get out of it. But I do find it comical — the ladies and gentlemen who parade their ladylikeness or gentlemanliness in defiance of Amor, who, let’s be honest, can put them marvelously in their place.

Men who are truly men, and women who are truly women, do not look down with fake disdain upon their own body.

They feel it deeply — they feel, in their very bodies, Nature's accusation against the degenerate human being, and they are ashamed. They are noble in their shame, and the humor of sexuality does not make them ridiculous. For them, sexual union is the celebration of a temporary, rightful freedom from shame — the Sunday of the inspired body. For them, sexual union is an ecstatic act of restoring honor to Nature. And when Nature then says, I created Women and Men, it is no longer an accusation, but the embrace of a Mother who warmly forgives.

Now that I'm speaking about the "body," I can appropriately return to the earlier point about the distinction between "body" and "image." If I were to say: a body "lives" and an image is "dead," I'd be guilty of an inaccuracy. For if an image truly deserves the name "image," it is very much alive — it does something, it evokes our admiration. But the life of the image is the life of the artist who created it. The highest tension of the creative act is not in the image, but in him. The ideal that compels him to create is far above his creation in the form of an image. If we could see and hear everything, we would see that ideal flaring up in

his body, hear it resound in his body. For a body is a more intimate reality than a mere image. A body is expression in the highest tension of life, an image is expression in reduced life-tension. An image is like a "solidified" body; a body is like a life-flowing image. That is why I said: "Fate was the Stirring of the Universe from the beginning. It swelled out into countless planets, and the planets were its body; their surface was the tension, the continual tension of the Universe's stirring. But when the time came, as it had to come, the roundness of the planets collapsed, wrinkled with age, and the planetary body relaxed from a creation-body into a creation-image." And so it also happened with the plants and the animals. The ever life-flowing Stirring of the Universe leaves its solidified expression to solidification itself, in order to continually reincarnate in more subtle matter — matter that can express its full life-tension in obedient elegance. And so it happens too with most humans. The Stirring of the Universe finds obedient material for expression in their bodies during the growing, flowing youth. But when that youth is past, their body solidifies into an image. And the memory of their youthful body becomes a furious

longing for beautiful days gone by, a furious jealousy of the growing, flowing youth of others. For even though their body sadly sinks back into being merely an image, something remains within them that refuses to be just an image. This is exactly where human transformation into image differs from that of the Earth: the human being is naturally called to remain an embodiment of the Stirring of the Universe, while the Earth is not. The Earth may become image — the human being may not. He feels this unconsciously, and therefore becomes aware of his own transformation into an image not as a rightful unfolding, but as an agonizing illness. I spoke earlier of the "body" of the falsely chaste. I should actually have said "shell" or "outer casing." For their outer shell is no longer a real body — it has become an image, and not even a truly human image, because it does not arise from specifically human life. A real human image exists only as a work of art. Yet I still spoke of "body" because I like to name something according to what it is called to become. The calling to be an embodiment still lives in them, and I acknowledge that calling — albeit with deep sorrow — in their furious longing to embody the lost youth.

Infinitely happier are the pure-hearted people. Their bodies remain in a state of growing, flowing youth because their

bodies feel thoughtfully — with awareness — that their stirring is the one immortal Stirring of the All. Even if their skin wrinkles and their blood vessels calcify, their bodies do not sink back into the looseness of old age. For their body is not that fragile muscle tissue of just a few years of freshness. They know themselves reborn into God Himself, once again embodied in more subtle matter. That is why there is not the slightest trace of envy in them toward the youth of others. Gladly, their old matter becomes nourishment for their new body — just as a good mother willingly becomes nourishment for her child and feels no jealousy for the youth of her child. They experience their eternal life as the eternal embodiment of their personality, as eternally growing, flowing youth, and they feel compassion for all who search for any other sign of personal eternity. Even the fragile matter of their few youthful years — it does not "harden"; even as their skin wrinkles and their blood vessels calcify, it does not turn to stone. Slowly, that worn-out matter returns to the Earth-image from which it came, carrying with it — even into death — the reflection of a new bodily smile. Oh, how reverently beautiful is the face of an elder, upon which the smile of new youth plays. So powerful in goodness is that radiance — the generous blessing that

shines upon all that has young life and gives life. With them, the "crown of old age" is no empty phrase…..

The pure in heart, who have honored (not merely "enjoyed" but honored) the flow of life in youthful bodies, the life that unites and gives birth in a divine, creative laugh, they alone attain the natural right to eternal embodiment. They see God, because they are God.

Obedience.

When only the noblest tones resound in our soul, the word "obedience" does not fall silent. But everything that suggests "servitude" or "coercion" does fall silent. Obedience, in its noblest tone, expresses completely unforced freedom. It speaks of "must," but only of joyful necessity.

This joyful necessity can rise up from our own soul, just like that, without a word or glance or any gesture from another human being. Then we speak preferably of inspiration, of our own tragic intuition.

This joyful necessity can also rise up from our own soul, awakened by a word or glance or some gesture from another human being — and then we speak of free obedience.

"Free judgment of the soul" is what I called morality. When that morality is awakened by a fellow human being who exerts no compulsion, a trinity comes to life: Authority – Obedience – Free Act.

Obedience is the free judgment of our own soul, awakened by freely judging Authority.

The true Authority is not a "stranger," because it expresses everything that whispers within our own innermost being. The true Authority is not a coercer, because only non-coerced obedience can truly recognize Authority. The true Authority is not a punisher, because it believes in the Justice of the one universal Emotion. The true Authority knows no reward, for it does not seek to be served.

When Authority speaks in relation to a specific case, it is called a Judge. When Authority speaks from the tragic inspiration of an entire people, for the sake of the whole people and itself, it is called a "Legislator". An independent nation is one that has its own Legislator and its own Judge.

The enemy of true obedience is the Individual, insofar as it still lives under the delusion of being more than a mere condition in the true order of things — in other words, the enemy is the arrogant Individual, and its domain is the World. The world

— not the opposite realm of a supernatural God, who does not exist, but the opposite realm of the Human Being, who does exist.

Where is the world? Everywhere the arrogant Individual lifts its head. Where personal calling and personal talent are violated by the force of hypocritical laws, made by a majority of individuals or by a single human-taming tyrant; where rich individuals show off to blind poor individuals with envy; where poor individuals lie in wait to stomp the hearts of envied rich individuals;

where “pious” is called what wants to serve a God;
where “humble” is called what cowardly schemes for safe revenge;
where “brave” is called what brazenly clenches its fists;
where “just” is called what gained power through low deceit;
where “merciful” is called what weakly mourns and pines;
where “chaste” is called what sits dully locked away, musty and stale;
where “obedient” is called what crawls and sneaks, there is the world.

How, then, does the Christosopher stand in relation to the world? With continual, calm and strong resistance of the soul, he will

ward off the world from his life—and… use the world. It is nothing more than a "commodity"; as a "commodity", it can be used. Let the individuals outdo one another in their frenzied haste! Fine! Their telegraphs and telephones and trains and trams are useful—they can all be used. Let the individuals outdo one another in elegance and practical inventions! Then they make beautiful furniture and build comfortable houses. Those are usable and pleasant to look at. They themselves gain no true joy from their frantic toil and envious display. But the Christosopher cannot help it if individuals reduce themselves to slaves. He does not envy, nor does he seek to show off. That gives him the right to know himself above the slaves—and to use them. Those inclined to servitude shouldn't object to this—the servants profit from it.

Obedience and world-contempt are one and the same soul-power…

Here the worldly smile their knowing, worldly-wise smile and say what, in worldly circles, is ultimately the only argument against all who despise the world: "We'll see what you say when you're hungry."

The worldly then think of the power of money. But money does not suppress the people of deep emotion. Money

—you have used it, proud individuals, to flaunt and to rule. But (this you did not foresee!) the Earth is reborn precisely in Money, and it repels all that would kill earthly grace through the power of wealth.

To the worldly person, I have nothing more to say. But I do still have something to say to you, who have followed me thus far, but do not yet understand this response. Let me then explain to you the essence of Money. Take note—not of the lack or surplus of money, but of Money as such. This belongs with the word "obedience." For we cannot truly know what it means to despise the world if we do not sense what Money truly is—and we already know that obedience and world-contempt are one and the same soul-force.

The most fundamental truth that can be said about Money is this: it is a human act, a continuous human act. Money is not a "crystallization" in which human doing is preserved and which can be unleashed at will. Money acts, acts continuously. Even if we leave it lying untouched, interest-free, in a well-locked safe, it continues to grant power over the cultural products of man and earth—a power that we must continuously actualize, on pain of starvation. Do not

confuse the act of Money with the power that individual humans can exert over each other through differences in financial quantity. Lack or excess of money delivers one individual into the power of another; the possibility of unequal distribution of money creates and sustains a fierce struggle between individual and individual. But that is not the act of Money—no more than the difference in quality between two machines is the act of the Machine itself. The act of the Machine is the acceleration and simplification of production—and that is something entirely different from the competition fought because one machine might be better than another. Likewise, the act of Money is: the processing of the Earth as the raw material of culture. Money, as a continuous human act, is not an exercise of power of man against man, but of Man in relation to the Earth. Money is the golden power that subjugates the Earth to the will of Man. Money is the ongoing cultural union of Man and Earth.

Now try, with pure and impartial intent, to imagine this reality — which remains a reality, despite everything. Banish all loud, emotional words within you

that have cursed Money. Banish all grumbling, emotional complaints from within you that have sighed under the burden of Money. Now, choose to see with reverence. Now, choose to behold the tragedy of the golden Deed of Money. Only then do you see rightly, only then do you grasp the essence of the Deed of Money. The essence of a human deed is its tragedy. For Unavoidable Suffering is both its soul and its limit. Unavoidable Suffering is its entire life, its entire gesture. Even the bad and ugly deeds are, when seen broadly and deeply, tragic — not for those who commit them, for to them their tragedy is invisible, but for those who can see, they truly are....

Once, Man was one with the Earth and did not even realize it. He lived with her, himself a part of her, naked in primitive innocence. And he enjoyed the fruits of the Earth, hanging from her trees and bowing down in gestures of offering. And he was content.... But then the time came, the time that had to come — and he grew discontent. Desires arose and grew in his heart, and he no longer found the Earth beautiful once he began to reflect on beauty and ugliness. He wanted to know. That was the original sin, which took away his naivety

and his contentment. That original sin is called culture. The fruits that once bowed down to Man in a gesture of self-offering no longer satisfied him. He began to cultivate “the herbs of the field,” started baking bread from them, and ended up distilling alcohol from them. And he also began to cultivate his body. He placed himself as a “spirit” above his body, believed he had to be ashamed of his body, and clothed himself when he started to ponder what nakedness meant. He began by covering bare skin and ended up inventing clothes that reveal more than any nakedness could show. And in feverish desire to beautify their worldliness beyond what it naturally was, people invented a means of exchange to ease mutual assistance in this beautification of their earthliness — a means of exchange to help each other in showing off against one another, in envying against one another. The desire to “gild” worldliness gave birth to golden Money. But now see, despite all the division among individuals, the all-human essence in Money. The separateness of any given commodity (whether for consumption or production) is entirely nullified in Money; Money represents no one good more than another, but the essence

of the commodity as such — the commodity not only as a finished product, but the commodity in its full scope, the commodity in becoming as well — in other words, the culture-act. Now see, in the glow of money, the tragic tears shimmer of Man, of the one Man. He became estranged from the Earth through his craving for knowledge, but he carries a longing for the Earth — an undying longing. That is why his Money performs that continuous human deed: culture, the beautifying of and toward the Earth. For is not all beauty, is not all adornment, the beauty of the Earth itself? Where is there beauty outside of earthliness? Whatever Money does, it reveals no other beauty than the beauty of the Earth, from which Man has become alienated. And so Man, in his persistent act of culture, returns to the Earth, reconciles with the Earth, to one day behold her again in naivety. No longer in primitive naivety, but in conscious naivety — in wisdom. No longer in mere contentment, but in happiness. I said: the deed of Money is the transformation of the Earth as raw material of culture. Now I may add: the tragedy of that deed is its arduous reconciliation of Man and Earth. A bitter necessity is that reconciliation — bitter necessity of both poverty and wealth. But do not see that necessity as

mere horror — see it as the one great tragedy of Man; not through trembling emotion, but through quiet, powerful awe. Then you will no longer complain about that "original sin," but understand it as the Fated separation from the Earth — and the Fated rediscovery of the Earth in new, reborn beauty. Through culture, back to Nature!

And now I dare repeat my bold claim: the Earth lives again in Money and repels all that would kill earthly grace through monetary power. One single emotion is the emotion of the one who believes in Fate, and the emotion of the Earth. Could they be enemies of one another? One single emotion is the emotion of the believer in Fate, and the earthly Beauty that gleams again in golden Money. Could they be enemies of one another? No — even the worldly man knows that there is much in the reality of money that is individually incomprehensible and elusive. But the believer in Fate knows that his thought, stirred by awe, surely protects him from emotional confusion — even in regard to Money. He will not ask from Money a thrill of sensation, not seek luxury to mock others, not seek power to dominate others, not grasp at a way to escape Unavoidable Pain. But he will ask of Money a shield — a shield against the worldling

who taunts: “We’ll see what you say when you're hungry.” He will ask of Money the freedom to think and speak aloud whatever he wills. He will ask to remain free from that which he still cannot help but see as dreadful, avoidable suffering. His faith tells him that his request is heard and answered — how, is not his concern. It isn’t necessary that everyone understands this. But whoever does understand it will be able to grasp the peace of mind of the obedient, world-despising person who can “ask” with such faith, even though he places no hope in the protection of an almighty Individual.

A word more on “contempt.” True contempt is, in itself, nothing other than a precise valuing, a clear seeing, a tragic seeing. It only becomes contempt in the eyes of the vain, who do not wish to be seen clearly. Thus, the honest valuation of the world’s laborers becomes contempt because those laborers vainly demand reverence for their restless striving to “get ahead,” their “diligence,” and “tireless effort,” or other such tedious virtues. No one has the right to despise a laborer simply for being a laborer. But when a laborer grows pretentious, he turns honest esteem into contempt.

FOURTH CHAPTER.

ON THE DEED OF EMOTION.

I. THE MIRACLE.

The act of emotion is the emotion itself — but considered in its manifestation, in its outward movement, by which it causes circumstances, conditions, sensations, in short, all particularities to obey its sovereign universality. I say “obey.” The power of emotion forces no one into reluctant submission, into crouching under the yoke in bitter resentment. No — no one submits to emotion in that way, no one cringes before it, no one can fear in it any coercion of one individual by another.

But freely, the heart of every being will obey emotion — whether it consciously acknowledges this obedience or not. And where no cunning lie can deny that obedience, emotion visibly breaks through in all dealings of individual with individual. The “miracle,” the true miracle of faith, is nothing other than an obeyed act of emotion. “Whom do the wind and waves obey?” To Emotion, from which the Universe unfolded,

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and which still continues to command within its own Universe.

All this is true for those who are able to properly distinguish the miracle in the strictest sense from its imitation — the marvelous or extravagant. At the marvelous, you marvel; the marvelous arises from a craving for the pleasant thrill of being astonished — that is why people watch magic tricks and enjoy listening to “occult” tales. But the miracle you admire from pure, disinterested admiration, from the most intimate emotion of beauty, which is sacred reverence. Emotion is powerful beyond all separateness, and the miracle is its essence — but as soon as a curious craving for extravagant phenomena arises, it punishes the immodest intruders by giving them exactly what they seek: it makes them blind to all that is truly miraculous and gives them a taste for trinkets and a delight in platitudes. That is why magic shows are so gaudily banal. That is why Christians are so blind to the simple miracle of the Gospel, and instead indulge themselves in fantastical fabrications.

But whoever, out of an abundance of true and calm admiration, no longer feels any craving for stimulating astonishment—within him lives the Emotion, and it performs miracles from him

and through him, showing him its miraculous deeds everywhere. He lives constantly in the presence of the Mystery, which he does not "understand," i.e., dissect with intellect or categorize into distinct mechanisms of "cause and effect," but which he clearly perceives, face to face—like the artist beholding his own work of beauty, like the mother beholding her own child. In every event he sees a gesture of Eternal Command and a gesture of Eternal Obedience—Eternal Obedience of all separateness to the Eternal Command of the Cosmic Emotion, which becomes personal Emotion in man. Thus he walks the Earth, marveling at every step at Justice: that which eternally obeys what must be obeyed, and that which eternally commands what must be commanded.

Worldlings, who do not know the miracle, call him a weakling, because he does not strive and toil with them to "achieve something." But in truth, he steps with his innermost humanity—his joys and his sorrows—outside the doing and undoing of individuals, because all of it is too small for him. Always near to the One Emotion, he obeys Her and performs only that great Deed: to obey Her. And She lets Her miraculous power flow through his obediently

opening individuality: thus that “weakling” becomes a miracle-worker. For now he not only sees the miracle everywhere, he also knows that the Cosmic Emotion works miracles through him. Unharmed in soul, he walks through mockery, scorn, and slander from the anxious, fretting, toiling little people. For he knows that, in part through him, life's beauty still lives on Earth. He is not a “useful member of society” and does not desire to be. But it is thanks to the man of emotion that society does not completely numb itself and bicker into oblivion over money-making and getting ahead. If poetry still breaks through in bourgeois married life, even if in the form of adultery; if love and hate can still blaze through the meticulous calculations of businessmen; if, despite all the measuring and weighing, people still think of an Undying Eternity — then it is the man of emotion who performs such miracles. He will continue to do such wonders, and the figures of social preservers and social reformers will not add up, because he still exists — the solitary wonderer.

And whatever “happens” to him — he knows it all to be one single miracle. Events take shape around him,

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called forth by his emotion, commanded by his emotion. "Coincidence," the others call it, because it is not in the least miraculous to them.

II. THE STIRRING LIFE IN THE ORDERING OF WORDS.

The human life of emotion has its own arrangement of words, its own style of language, which is the most common act of emotion. I could call it the “normal” act of emotion — if “normal” did not carry the dull ring of well-to-do-healthy, respectably-neat, competently-boring. For when I call that particular arrangement of words the “ordinary” act of emotion, I mean absolutely nothing inferior by it. Human chatter can be of less value than a dog’s bark, but the style of emotion is a sublime miracle of creation. The act of emotion always "speaks" from heart to heart, and people usually "speak" by means of words. That is why emotion especially animates words, expressing itself so gladly in the timeless human, in what lies “close at hand” day after day.

The arrangement of words tells us far more than their literal meaning alone. The mode of expression in the word is all that is human, the entire human being, noble

or base. The movement of the words, their coherence, their tone—in short, their "style"—tells everything that stirs within a person, their ugliest ugliness and their most radiant beauty. The motion of speech can shriek with venomous envy; it can rasp with repulsive lust; it can sob in short, gasping bursts with the despair of an upstart's thirst for domination; it can whisper slyly with the nature of a spy, preying on intimacies; it can snicker with the piercing glee of the vulgar crowd when a noble is dragged through the mud... But hear the sonorous words, see the supple words of the person of emotion! "Refute" them freely, set all your cunning traps, you who envy and lack a speaking soul. The soul that can speak does not fear you. Its word-life is free by inalienable birthright. What is born of the soul cannot be caught. I hear it resound, the inspired word—of wedding feasts and festivals of love; I hear the fanfare of freedom's call and joy in life; I hear the resigned weeping over violated human beauty; I hear the whispering of blushing intimacy; I hear the triumph of lofty noble pride in unassailable solitude...

As uplifting as it is to hear a sublime thought

expressed in a deeply felt and moving style, so irritating is it to hear it parroted by an individual who lacks the life of genuine emotion. Just compare closely the different ways one and the same thought can be spoken, and you will hear the soul-tone of the word born from deep feeling — or else the hollow halting and stumbling, or the heavy bluster of "rhetoric."

Here are a few examples:

Thought: *Human life is a mystery*.

Godefroid Kurth, professor of history at the University of Liège, expresses this thought in his book "*L'Église aux tournants de l'histoire*" as follows: "Why was man placed in this world, and what is the end of his existence here below? Must he be only the ephemeral spectator of the tableau of creation, or the unconscious instrument of some mission higher than his own, or the lamentable plaything of blind forces that dispute the possession of his senses and of his heart? Is he, with the contradictions that are at the root of his being, and with his boundless aptitude for suffering, the abortive child of this world and the plaything

of an eternal illusion? Has he a future to conquer, an end to attain, and are this future and this end worth the effort they cost him? Or is he only a fortuitous and lamentable combination of elements associated for the time in a community of joys and of sufferings, to be finally disassociated and recomposed later on in the eternal circle of pitiless fatalities?"

Listen to that “hollow halting and stumbling.” Kurth wants to make us sense the mysteriousness of human life, but nowhere do we perceive the single, unified emotion that must also reveal itself in the unity of its expression. He speaks about all sorts of things, which he presents as many separate fragments — about man's origin, his purpose, natural forces, delusion, and so on, and so on. But where is the soul, the one, unity-creating essence — where is the emotion?

Maurice Maeterlinck expresses the same thought in "*Le Trésor des humbles*":

“There is an everyday tragedy that is much more real, much deeper, and much more in keeping with our true being than

the tragedy of great adventures..... Rather, it would be a matter of showing the wonder in the very fact of living. It would be a matter of showing the existence of a soul in itself, amid an immensity that is never at rest. It would be about making us hear, above the usual dialogues of reason and feeling, the more solemn and unbroken dialogue between the being and its destiny. It would be about making us follow the hesitant and painful steps of a being who draws nearer to or farther from its truth, its beauty, or its God."

One must possess very little feeling for language not to hear the essential difference between Kurth and Maeterlinck — the echoer and the man of deep emotion. The one Mystery of human life has grasped Maeterlinck in his soul, and therefore he speaks it forth as one continuous reality that compels his entire being to see and speak.

Another thought: *The Universe obeys one Creative Force.*

Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet *) expresses it like this: "He who reigns in the heavens, from whom all dominions derive their power, to whom alone belong glory, majesty, and

*) Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet (1627–1704) was a highly influential French bishop, theologian, preacher, and writer.

independence—He is also the only one who, with lofty pride, prescribes laws to kings and at His pleasure gives them great and terrifying lessons." —Boom! If Bossuet had truly felt, from within, how one single Creative Force moves the universe, he wouldn't have decorated it so noisily with "glory, majesty," etc.

Thales expresses the very same thought: "Even stones fall from divine love." — Now I hear the universal obedience to the one Creative Force. What, at first glance, seems farther removed from divine love than falling stones? Yet whoever is able to see their fall with such unpretentious simplicity and such boldness—as a continuous act of that one Love—believes: his moved soul sees and speaks.

Another thought: *Death is not the negation of life*.

I have heard this stated very dramatically by a preacher: "Is everything over with this life? Believe what you will—I do not believe it." — The preacher had this sentence printed!

P.C. Boutens *) expresses the same thought:

"*And life is only truly life*
When it stirs unto death." —

*) Pieter Cornelis Boutens (1870–1943) was a notable Dutch poet, classicist, and intellectual. The excerpt is from his poem "*Het Geheim*".

That is complete, that is precise, a perfectly accurate formulation that says nothing too much and nothing too little—that is simply said by someone who knows—that is soul-language.

The style of deep feeling is, by its very nature, "quiet," just as the emotion itself is, by its very nature, "quiet." The language of emotion speaks, by nature, only to those who themselves are moved by nearly the same emotion. But it may happen that the person of deep feeling speaks loudly—by the incidental fact that, out of heartfelt compassion, he wants to be heard by those not yet moved as well. Then the quiet, sacred priestly style becomes the resounding voice of an apostle. Only pleasure-seekers pass by without emotion when they hear a true apostle speak. People of feeling recognize him as a kindred soul—and others may be startled, perhaps to a blessing yet to come. Pleasure-seekers are also all those who are entirely absorbed in purely intellectual work. They may put on airs, these people of science—but is it really anything more than a "little thrill," to win a debate or to be the first to spot a new bacillus? Pleasure-people are all those who do not live, nor desire to live, for and through the sorrows and joys of deep human life itself — those who cannot flinch

in pain when they hear the talk of powerful worldlings, how they lie away the Human Being for the sake of a job or a few more years of miserable toiling — those who cannot listen to the even more powerful, yet wholly humble, voice of Truth. She calls the Human to life — to full, transparent life of heart and mind and body, in one moment of eternity. Pleasure-people go watch tightrope walkers or bacteria, as long as it's entertaining, and consider a prophet "not right in the head." And truly, there is danger that the prophet may indeed become "not right in the head." For he speaks to those who hover between pleasure-people and people of deep feeling; he speaks to those who long for a broad, full life. They will take revenge on him if they fail to attain what he made shine before their desirous souls — and it is dreadful to fall into the vengeful thoughts of disappointed souls.

I will let you read a few pages of apostolic speech. And it would truly gladden me if you could feel a bit of compassion for the sorely tested one, who has been called to be a prophet.

"When Zarathustra came to the next town, which lies beside the forest, he found many people gathered in the marketplace; for it had been announced that a tightrope

walker would perform. And Zarathustra spoke to the people:

"I proclaim to you the Superhuman. Humanity is something that must be overcome. What have you done to overcome humanity?

All beings so far have created something beyond themselves: and you want to be the ebb of this great tide and would rather return to the animal than overcome the human being? ....

I beseech you, my brothers, remain true to the Earth and do not believe those who speak to you of otherworldly hopes! They are poisoners, whether they know it or not.

They are despisers of life, dying and self-poisoned ones, of whom the Earth is weary: so let them pass away!….

Once the soul looked down with contempt upon the body — and at that time, this contempt was considered the highest virtue: it wanted the body thin, ugly, starved. Thus it thought it could escape the body — and the Earth.

Oh, this soul was itself still thin, hideous, and starved: and cruelty was the pleasure of this soul!

But even you, my brothers, tell me: what does your body proclaim about your soul? Is your soul not poverty and filth and a miserable contentment?

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Truly, humanity is a polluted stream. One must be a sea to receive a polluted stream without becoming unclean.

Behold, I proclaim the Superhuman: humanity is this sea; into humanity your great contempt can sink and be lost.

What is the greatest thing you can experience? It is the hour of your great contempt. The hour in which even your happiness becomes loathsome to you, and likewise your reason and your virtue. ....

Not your sin — your complacency cries out to heaven, your stinginess even in your sin cries out to heaven! ...."

(Fr. Nietzsche: "Also sprach Zarathustra")

That is truly the style of the apostle. He speaks loudly, but without loudness. The strength of the apostle was born in solitary silence, and now it bursts forth in sounds for the restless people—loud sounds, still infused with the silence from which they came. They pierce unsettlingly into the souls of men, yet not the slightest haste disturbs their tone: the apostolic speech blossomed in quiet contemplation, and now that it bursts open, suddenly like a ripened flower, it still breathes the calm that envelops eternity. How stern is the apostle's speech, stern with abundant strength, yet how

tender is that sternness, which chastises out of love: I implore you, be either warm or cold, but do not insult yourself with repulsive lukewarmness.

When I have contemplated the life of the word in such a way and then return to the talking world, I can be overcome with a sorrow of indescribable longing, a compassion for all that is human, full of tears that can never be wept. It seems to me then an unforgivable cruelty against myself to utter even a single word more — words that have so often been forced into servitude for beings that hate truth. What word has not been violated and swept aside when it wished to speak truth? Truth lives so very close to us, but we make sure that it can speak only in the deepest suffering. We seize the poor, defenseless words and kick them out into the world: "Talk, slander, insinuate, lie, but above all: make noise! We will squeeze and burn you until you scream in pain, for what we want is noise — anything to keep nearby Truth from speaking. For that nearby Truth might betray our secrets and humiliate us… we do not want to be ashamed of our emptiness of love, our unhappy marriage, our hearts full of pent-up envy; we want to meddle in things that are none of our concern,

with scandalous gossip and bickering and much more — otherwise what truly concerns us becomes visible and audible. . . .”

Poor people! And yet the Truth is our very being, and no shame is cunning enough in its lies to fully conceal her. Still, the Truth speaks — even when we try to kill her with our words. She speaks through our eyes, our gestures, our way of walking, and while our mouths laugh with vain boasts, our lips tremble in forced admission of our own smallness. Why this forced admission? Because we haven’t yet realized that there is only one true greatness: to live from the one shared humanity, and to be free from anxious worry about petty, withering honor. Because we haven’t yet realized that there is only one true happiness: the speaking solitude of the one All-Human.

"Solitude! My homeland, Solitude! Too long I lived wildly in wild foreign lands, for me not to return to you with tears!

Now go ahead and wag your finger at me, like mothers do when they scold; now smile at me, like mothers smile; now just say: ’And who was it that once stormed away from me like a whirlwind? ...

Zarathustra, I know everything—and that among the

many, you were more forsaken, you solitary one, than you ever were with me!. . . .

Here, however, you are with yourself, at home and in your own house. . . .

You may speak uprightly and sincerely here to all things; and truly, it sounds like praise to their ears that someone speaks plainly with all things!

Here, all the words and word-shrines of being spring open before me: all Being here wants to become word, all Becoming wants to learn from me how to speak...."

(Fr. Nietzsche: Also sprach Zarathustra).

III. CARRIED ON THE CLOUDS.

A natural phenomenon can become our Mistress in two distinct ways. We may take her as an example or as a model. She becomes an example to us when we imitate her — for instance, when we observe the flight of birds to invent flying machines. But this is not the noblest way to learn from nature; imitation is always something of lesser worth. Nature becomes a model to us when her appearance moves us, and the most human part of us expresses that emotion in the most human of all expressions: purely spoken and purely arranged words. Thus are born concepts, free from all heavy-handed fantasy — concepts, bright-white with precision and warm with living inspiration. They imitate nothing, they describe nothing — they prophesy and prescribe, issuing commands from the one universal Emotion itself.

Here is a natural phenomenon we all know:

Where the Earth has lived through a full sunlit day,

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transforming within her dark womb juices and gases into colorful fruits and flowers, there—at twilight—vapors rise from her surface. These vapors are called "bad" by people, because they bring about all kinds of illnesses. But to the Earth, these vapors are not bad—they are "unprocessed": they have not been absorbed into the fertile life of the Earth, and so they begin to decay, now that the Earth, abandoned by the generative rays of the sun, begins to rest. But when the Sun, with its warmth and light high in the sky, encounters those vapors, it shapes them into clouds, which belong to the beauty of the Earth… yet reveal themselves to be even more beautiful in their elegant suppleness and shifting color-play than the earthly things below, which appear stiff and coarse in comparison to the fleeting lightness of the transparent clouds. And the Sun sends the clouds back down as a fertile blessing, renewing the face of the Earth—her ever-youthful face.

Let those who wish describe this natural phenomenon by imitating it with picturesque words… but for us, let it not be a mere example to follow, but a model to become—a word born of personal wisdom that imitates nothing. Let, free from all imaginative imitation, your thoughts open themselves

and listen to the life of emotion awakened through simple seeing.

The one Earth lives within the multitude of human beings, transforming in her singular, elusive mother-life small desires and illusions and opinions into great human strength and truth and faith. But many little desires and illusions and petty opinions are indigestible by the purifying, beautifying fire of Earth: they tear themselves away from the Earth and whirl about in a restless world. That world is “evil” to us because it brings about all sorts of degeneration. But to the Earth, these worldly things are not evil, but “unprocessed”—they are not taken up into the fertile life of Earth, and they dissolve where the Earth must release them, not sufficiently warmed and fertilized by the one Being of Emotion, who is the Sun-Human of earthly humanity. But the one human Emotion glows, sun-center in the whole soul-sphere, ever growing in rising creative warmth; and even the most degenerate is drawn toward it, for even in the most degenerate lives the longing—that bitterly cries out—for the Sun-warmth of Emotion. Always they rise — the little humanities, the unprocessed, the

restless, the yearning — and the one great Emotion meets them, shapes from them a human body, earthly and belonging to the beauty of the Earth… yet more beautiful in its free laughter, in its subtle lightness, than the fairest human being below. Stiff and heavy is even the most beautiful human here below, compared to him — the open, transparent-true, mighty Royal Human, who must appear when our eyes are free enough to see that glorious body: the gesture of the Sun-Soul who binds and enlivens all decomposed human wickedness, until it becomes his sacred flesh renewed, and his sacred blood. You do not grieve over the harmful vapors of the Earth-planet when you see the beautiful colors the sun brings out in them — and when you have become truly "seeing," you no longer lament the wickedness of humanity: Christ needed it in order to become a living appearance for the "seers."

But now, the Sun-Human is not yet a visible presence to us, the waiting ones. The sun of fruits and flowers is only his symbol for us. That sun — the most visibly visible — reveals the Earth here below, and up there, the cloud-masses, lighter than the Earth, yet still belonging to her: borne upon the Earth. But lighter

still is the realm to which rises the mass of unprocessed humanity — lighter than the clouds, yet still belonging to the clouds: borne upon the clouds. In that realm lives the Christ, and he shall shape human-clouds into appearance, into his appearance. And unceasingly he sends down, in fructifying blessing, sanctified humanity — his humanity, his grace — back to the Earth, renewing her ever-rejuvenating face.

"Borne upon the clouds" — whoever cannot keep their thoughts free from heavy-colored fantasy sees here a clothed man, swaying on impossibly solid cloud-forms, and either denies such childishness or is childish enough to be content with it. But whoever values the light, contemplative life of emotion more than vivid fantasy, and more than isolated fact to which fantasy always clings, he may know prophecy — know it with faithful certainty. Unbelief it is — unbelief chained to fantasy and crude literalism — that continues to burden the Christian gospel with "History." Only once that petrified deadness has been radiated out of the Gospel by life-giving faith — only then does Truth reign, which brings forth miracles that triumph over facts — miracles less marvelous than the healing

of the sick or the resurrection of corpses, but richer in simple, reverent wonder of life.

Meanwhile, still they swirl around us — the unprocessed little desires, little illusions, little opinions — even close around us, within our own deeds, our own flesh and blood. Yet even this is already a glorious prelude to the coming revelation of Christ: that we know all so-called "human wickedness" as material of the body — inescapably necessary appearance-matter for the soul of Christ. And the act of knowing this, which already lives within us as prophecy of joyous vision yet to come... it is the forgiveness of all we once called evil. Forgiveness first for our own wickedness, and forgiveness for others drawn from the power of forgiveness for our own fault. Certainly, "bad" vapors float around — of envy, revenge, belittling vanity. But we now know that these vapors rise full of longing, toward the light of the Christ-sun. So we no longer see envy as mere divisive decay alone, but also as weak but fervent longing for love. We no longer see vengeance merely as preservation of the small self, but also as yearning for great Justice. Thus we no longer see vanity merely as sadly comical

ostentation, but also as a not-yet-conscious pride in the one God-Man whose Life is the Life of us all. That true forgiveness, born of clear-seeing, is already a miraculous act of the one Christ. In their hearts, all people worship that Act; in their hearts, they all obey the wondrous Command of that Act. Only their reason does not yet know what they are doing… how all their evil and smallness rises into the sphere, carried by the clouds, and brings rising homage to the God-Man, who lives there in his most powerful life and causes growth. Their reason does not yet know that "evil" deeds are not truly evil, but "unprocessed," and therefore have a right to be knowingly forgiven. Once even their reason opens itself to that Truth, their envy and vengeance and vanity will be formed by the Christ-sun into glorified love, justice, and humble pride.

IV. PURE LISTENING.

As yet, Christ himself has not appeared to us, undeniably revealed to both thought and senses.

But he is already forming his cloud-body and sends his holy dew and holy rain to the waiting Earth.

That dew is Language, consecrating Language; it humanizes all that feels and thinks.

That rain is the words, clear-bright words; they purify all that strives to live humanly.

What child of man will say: Language is mine and not yours? Language is the whole of a people, the Human, still wrapped in the character of nations but nonetheless the Human — born, not made.

What child of man will say: this word is mine and not yours? If the word is truly word — born, not made — then the life of concepts of many is from the one-born all-human knowing.

Language is not yet the Christ, but she hovers

from Christ's sphere of light, obedient Angel, faithful Messenger — the good Language.

And the words are not yet the Christ either, yet they still speak from the One who was not made, but born.

Do not listen to those who, in speaking, obscure Language and the words, defending their own eloquent opinion,

loud in voice or gesture to break into the house of your soul;

or slyly intrusive, sweetly flattering, seeking to impress in order to slip through to your innermost being,

or spinning occult tales that stir your confusing fantasy: in that confusion, their greedy hands reach.....

Listen only to those who reveal Language, saying: this word was born in this way, and that word in that way, and believe only when it echoes within you: Yes, I have long heard it that way; these are my words, though I had not yet known them clearly.

Then your listening is a pure listening.... No separate voice binds your narrow self to another narrow self, but what was born in many as one, that listens, and speaks, and finds itself again.

It is really quite simple. But do not fear simplicity — so long as it is thoughtful and clear.

It is also very difficult. Wherever great Unity lives, separate selfhood must surrender itself as dead. But do not fear that dying — it is as unmade as it is born. Oh, cowardly deceit in whatever does not dare to die and says: I refuse to die...

Linger in the valley of separate deeds and play with them — a pleasant pastime with colorful toys.

But in the valley of deeds only tin trinkets shine. This alone is your sun-blessed day: when you do your great Deed — your great Deed of listening.

Thus do you work alongside the Lord's messengers, preparing thought and sense down here below.

And know: you shall live where He lives —where thinking and seeing and hearing and tasting and smelling and feeling, where everything is listening — the eternally blissful labor of listening.

Now, Language is not yet the Lord, not yet the Master, the Redeemer, the Savior Himself.

The Master who speaks away all wavering, who transforms all "must" into conscious, joyful necessity.

The Redeemer, who loosens all bonds by which self is bound to self.

The Savior, the eternal Sunday, where all Life listens and speaks and rediscovers itself....

No, Language is not yet the Lord.

For many tongues has Language, shaped by the nature of many peoples — but the Lord is One, and He alone.

Name Him with a word that soars above the speaking multitude of all nations, begotten, not made: Christ.

And name His wisdom with a word that likewise rises, begotten, not made: Sophia.

Now ask never again how He will appear to you, called forth by your act of listening.

Alas, you turn to your imagination — that heavily burdened imagination — and once again it replies with the same image: a man in robes, rocking back and forth on impossibly solid clouds,

or worse yet: a gilded pope with cardinals, screaming-red,

or more vulgar still: a decent man who finds dullness virtuous, praising it as goodness.

No Sun is a Sun and still loves heaviness. No

Sun is truly Sun if it desires a dull grayness, a tame dullness without danger.

Just wait patiently, until He appears to you.

He who must appear when nothing but listening can respond to your pure act of listening.

He who is Master, and Redeemer, and Savior, whose action is the action of a King:

To create a people, one in soul, freely obeying His free Command: that the Only-Begotten Beauty shall reign — and She alone.

V. BEAUTY OF LIFE.

The sound of the word *) is the echo of a person's immediate, ever-present surroundings.

So may your immediate, ever-present surroundings be beautiful, out of reverence for your word, which has the right to a pure sound.

Let what is always necessary be beautiful, then your word-sound will become beautiful too, and your whole human being will be educated in the beauty of life — and will part from the beauty of unnecessary things as from a past, long childhood.

Where what is permanently necessary is beautiful, and the beautiful permanently necessary, there the necessary is perfect and beauty is perfect, and one thinks of "art" only in grateful remembrance.

Music is beautiful, but more beautiful still is the good sound

*) Distinguish the word itself from the sound of the word. The word itself is the concept insofar as it manifests itself; the sound of the word is its auditory image—either an imitation or an embodiment of it.

of the word. Music sings now and then, and outside of what is necessary in life; but the sound of words is always with us, word-sound is necessary.

Visual art is beautiful, but more beautiful is that which, well-shaped, serves us in daily life. We hang paintings — solitary objects — on our necessary walls, and place sculptures beside essential furnishings..

A love song is beautiful, but more beautiful is love itself, the necessary.

Art is only art, a longing for the ever-necessary beauty in our own body and soul and spirit and gesture.

For many, art is still necessary: the homesickness for what is truly essential burns in them day and night — dear pilgrims toward the distant Fatherland.

But for one whose faith has become Fate and Fate his faith, he desires only the uniquely-born Necessity, fully matured beauty alone.

He waits only for his King, the King who is all necessity and all glory.

And his faithful-knowing waiting is free of longing, his creative waiting,

In rich Solitude.

VI. CHRISTOSOPHY.

Christosophy is nothing other than undiluted faith in Christ Himself, the God-Man.

Undiluted faith: free from all history, which relies on trust in storytellers we do not know; free from all church authority, which is built on historical authority and therefore can offer no more certainty than history itself. The gospels, which for the most part aim to be history, neither grant nor explain our faith. On the contrary: only our faith can find and reveal the Gospel within the gospel. And the miraculous events neither grant nor explain our faith. On the contrary: faith alone can work miracles and experience them as such.

Faith in Christ Himself: disconnected from all reliance on man or book or system. This faith necessarily grows from a completely unprejudiced perception of that which, by its very nature, necessarily reveals itself to us; and this unprejudiced perception expresses itself in pure language and

is reciprocally and strictly controlled by pure language. The only thing that might be called "systematic" in this vision — in a broader sense — is the sustained mindfulness paired with sustained naturalness. In this way, the Christosophist comes to see more and more clearly the eternal Christ Himself, revealed in the nature of things and of words, which necessarily prophesy a much more perfected embodiment in a more subtle, non-worldly, earthly sphere.

Christ, the God-Man: the Fated, no longer seen with fear and dread, but experienced in mindful surrender; the fated, reborn into consciousness, creating and giving birth to thoughts, creating and giving birth to language, creating and giving birth to all that is unmanufactured and human; the Human par excellence, from whom all human individuals derive their humanity — *more* human insofar as they absorb more of His All-Personality, and less so the more they act as isolated individuals; *more* human the more freely they obey Him, and less so the more they serve their own or another's individual self.

Christosophy is nothing other than undiluted faith in Christ Himself, the God-Man.

Christosophy, as pure life of thought, is not for

the general public, but for very few. Only true aristocrats of thought can fully live Christosophy. Aristocrats of thought are only those who recognize truth only in pure thought, and can pass by all striving born of desire as unworthy of being lived. Aristocrats of thought feel called only to the act of "pure listening."

This work of listening is too subtle to be done in the coarse world; too free to be done by those bound with the cords of the world; too quiet to be done where all with mouth and tongue are allowed to speak. This great work can take place only in the earthly intimacy of flowers and cultivated things, as purely earthly as earthly flowers.

If Christosophy — now still hovering without a home — should "take place," it will find its "centers" in communities of life that will be, above all, communities of language in the noblest sense of the word — communities of life in which the sacred service of Language is celebrated, in which the act of "pure listening" is concentrated. "Concentrated," not separated from the world — just as the Sun is not separated from the Earth, but remains a blessing of light in constant radiance for the Earth.

Even outside those centers, Christosophy will continue to speak from the abundance of the joy of listening within its fully devoted followers. To the world, it will speak as best it can—not from soul to soul in complete openness, but through parables, symbols, and the rich variety of mass belief. If the world were truly grateful, it would honor its quietest workers—those who brought light, those who struggled through the multitude of sciences, arts, and popular beliefs in order to arrive at the purest culture: the beauty of life itself. But if the world were truly grateful, it would no longer be the world.

So it did not happen, that I had spoken and you had listened.

I listened with you, and what had spoken was Language alone.

And if I listened with depth enough to hear, it came from sheer delight in listening.

And if my listening turned into song, it came from pure joy of listening.

Did not Language say to us: emotion, and reverence,
example and image, and so many other words
from its one Life, born of all, not made?

So I was with you a reverent listener: obedient herald
of the Lord's own Messenger.

THESES.

I. Fate is deeply terrifying when first experienced, but becomes deeply encouraging when intimately, tragically understood.

II. That which is most terrifying at first encounter, yet becomes most comforting when deeply felt—this is what people express, consciously or unconsciously, when they speak of the true God.

III. Idols arise because humans seek protection from the forces of Fate. From many idols, one true God cannot be formed.

IV. Human emotion is the working-through of the one Creative Force within a human individual.

V. The pure pursuit of Truth is the unconditional opening of oneself to what is naturally observable.

VI. Everything is nature—that is to say: everything is born. But what strikes us as inescapably "constructed," we must not yet call "nature" or "natural."

VII. When a phenomenon of nature is seen as an "archetype," it does not give rise to comparison, but to wisdom.

VIII. Life is the unity of giving birth and being born: it is happening.

IX. Where a human individual surrenders to the one Human Essence, there, Personality reveals itself.

X. Only Personality is original. The most individual expression of the most individual feeling may avoid imitation, but that is merely negative. True originality is never "peculiar."

XI. God is Christ and Christ is God: the one divine-human Personality itself.

XII. "Salvific events" are disturbing words from the apostles—words spoken into the calm life of Christ—addressed to a dreary humanity whose longing for Christ is, for now, a longing for unrest.

XIII. The true miracle is the simplest occurrence.

XIV. Whoever builds their faith on isolated events is forsaken by the one God.

XV. "The hand of little employment hath the daintier sense." (Hamlet*, Act 5, Scene 1*).

XVI. To suppress oneself or to suppress others is an expression of brute force, driven by fear of the power of Truth.

XVII. Suggestion is the coercion of one individual upon another. Truth does not suggest.

XVIII. "Passionate oratory" is a form of suggestion. The proclaimer of Truth explains.

XIX. Dry explanation is no explanation at all. True explanation is a form of emotion.

XX. Truth needs no support from proofs. "Proofs of Truth" are merely pleadings.

XXI. Language is the growing revelation of Christ to the peoples of the world.

XXII. Open, reflective listening to the life-words of one's mother tongue is human re-creation, a necessary national preparation for international human-to-human communication.

XXIII. To live freely grants the right to die freely.

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